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Legislated Towns in Virginia, 1680-1705: Growth and Function, 1680-1780

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LEGISLATED TOWNS IN VIRGINIA, 1680-1705: GROWTH AND FUNCTION, 1680-1780.

A Thesis

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by

Beth-Anne Chernichowski

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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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Approved, July 1974

Richard M. Brown

Philip J. Funigiello

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PREFACE

All quotes appear in their original form. To facilitate reading, the use of "sic" after the peculiar spellings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has not been adhered to. And, all dates are as they appear in the original. They have not been converted to the modern style.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to Richard M. Brown, Philip J. Funigiello and Kevin P. Kelly for their reading and criticism of the manuscript.

LIST OF MAPS

ABBREVIATIONS FOR THE VIRGINIA GAZETTE

The following abbreviations are used in the text to denote the various editions of the Virginia Gazette in terms of their editors and publishers:

C: Clarkson and Davis, 1779-1780.

D: Dixon and Hunter, 1775-1778; Dixon and Nicolson, 1779-1780.

P: Purdie, 1775-1779.

PD: Purdie, 1766, succeeded by Purdie and Dixon, 1766-1775.

Pi: Pinkney, 1774-1776.

R: Rind, 1766-1773.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the nature of urbanization in colonial Virginia as revealed through a study of the twenty-seven sites designated towns by the General Assembly in 1680, 1691 and 1705. These towns are used as a control group to study the concepts of both "town" and "urbanization."

Through the use of theories developed in disciplines other than history, a town is defined as a settlement that has diversified from farming. It has a function, determined by its geographic location and supported by its inhabitants. A town is not an autonomous unit, but has a relationship to its formal and functional geographic regions. Urbanization is defined as a dynamic process of growth beyond rural life styles not limited in space or time. It is basically an economic mechanism that involves interaction with the entire society, not simply one segment living within the physical boundary of a town or a city.

Historical sketches of the twenty-seven legislated towns are presented. These sketches are then used as data for a functional analysis, which classifies seventeen towns as successful. And, of these, sixteen are determined to fulfill the needs of urbanization.

The study concludes that, within the limits of the definition set forth above, urbanization was present in these twenty-seven towns of Tidewater Virginia. This urbanization was characterized by central places and developed by a functional region determined by the nature of the formal region.

LEGISLATED TOWNS IN VIRGINIA, 1680-1705: GROWTH AND FUNCTION, 1680-1780.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Every schoolchild knows, claims at least one eminent historian, that Virginia had no towns in the Tidewater period of its history. The demographic patterns of the Tidewater region, determined by crops and geography, were not conducive to town settlement. Nor did the lack of schools, the weakness of institutional religion and the absence of a merchant class make town settlements a logical characteristic of colonial Virginia life.[1] Yet, this study attempts to question that which every schoolchild knows, the absence of towns.

The character of urban development in colonial Virginia is a much debated issue. Until recently, scholars have largely ignored the existence of urbanization and emphasized only the rural qualities, stating that urbanization

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[1]John C. Rainbolt, "The Absence of Towns in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," Journal of Southern History 35 (1969): 343.

was of little consequence in Virginia.[2] Historians have blamed the lack of towns on the cultivation of tobacco which made it more profitable to own a plantation than to live in a town. Moreover, the presence of so many navigable rivers in Tidewater Virginia made towns unnecessary, for each plantation could sell and receive goods at its own wharf.[3]

Contemporary sources seem to support this interpretation. Writing in 1657, Anthony Langston complained of Virginia that "Townes & Corporations stored with Trades and Manufactures are the onely defect wee have to make us the most flourishing and profitable Plantation his Majesty hath."[4] In the early eighteenth century, Robert Beverley blamed "the ambition of each man. . . of being a lord of a vast, though unimproved territory for the unhappy settlement"[5]

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[2]The notable exception being Joseph A. Ernst and H. Roy Merrens, "'Camden's turrets pierce the skies!': The Urban Process in Southern Colonies during the Eighteenth Century," William and Mary Quarterly (third series) 30 (1973): 549-574.

[3]Edward M. Riley, "The Town Acts of Colonial Virginia," Journal of Southern History 16 (1950): 306.

[4]Anthony Langston, "On Townes, Corporations; and on the Manufacture of Iron; A Report as a Result of a General Assembly Commission of March 14, 1657," William and Mary Quarterly (second series) 1 (1921): 100.

[5]Robert Beverley, The History and Present State of Virginia (published 1722) (Richmond, Virginia: J. W. Randolph, 1855); Readex Microcards, p. 45.

which produced few towns. Hugh Jones wrote in 1724 that although a need for diversification in life styles was realized, Virginians had "neither the interest nor inclinations. . . to induce them to cohabit in towns."[6] And even Thomas Jefferson stated that since Virginia was "intersected with navigable rivers. . . no towns of any consequence were present."[7] These colonial writings are pointed to by historians as proof that urbanization simply did not and could not exist in Virginia.

The fault of relying upon these contemporary observations is the fact that "the observer is always a part of the observation."[8] The only urbanization these writers were familiar with was European. What "constituted urban life in Europe at the time"[9] had to be their standard, and by comparison, Virginia was simply rural.

European urbanization of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was simply the modification of the medieval

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[6]Hugh Jones, The Present State of Virginia (published 1724) Richard Lee Morton, ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), p. 73.

[7]Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, 1787, William Peden, ed. (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), p. 108.

[8]Ernst and Merrens, "'Camden's turrets'," p. 552.

[9]Ibid.

city. Existing cities were remodeled and expanded, changing the character of a few streets or squares and adding a few great palaces or churches to quarters that remained essentially medieval in character."[10] As a result of this process, the city was stylized into certain functional areas. Thus, the palace was the center of the bureaucratic mechanisms, the walled fortifications housed the standing armies, the cathedrals physically united the religious institutions, and the market areas served to center the business interests.[11] Urbanization was a physical expansion of an existing city, characterized by a distinction of areas.

The municipal corporation of Stuart England conformed to this pattern, and this form was brought to the new world by the colonists who thoroughly agreed that urban life was the proper way of life.[12] Since the English town usually had at least one of four major distinctions, or functions (i.e., it might have been a judicial entity, a corporate

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[10] Roy Willis, Western Civilization, An Urban Perspective, 2 vols. (Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Co., 1973), 2:485.

[11] Ibid., 2:485-492.

[12] Ernest S. Griffith, History of American Government, Colonial Period (New York: Oxford University Press, 1938), pp. 17-19.

unit for the legal management of property, an urban center with markets and fairs, or a parliamentary or voting district), the English colonists perceived towns as items most necessary for the enactment of certain functions mandatory for the legal, institutional and commercial welfare of the colonies. Therefore, the colonists began their adventure with the assumption that towns would be built. But, in the English system, "a written charter is to a city what a written constitution is to a nation,"[13] and therefore, the legal rather than the administrative or economic aspect of town creation seems to have dominated the colonists' concerns. Thus, incorporations of towns occurred at a stage of growth that would have been considered premature in England. While the legal characteristic of the English municipal corporation was easily repeated in the colonies, the other characteristics were assumed to follow, not precede, incorporation. The cart had been placed before the horse.[14]

This early incorporation, combined with the simple age of European cities, helped to create the distinction between European and colonial urbanization. The European

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[13] Ibid., p. 33.

[14] See Griffith, History of American Government, Chapters 1-4 for further discussion.

settlers wanted to build towns and cities modeled after the forms known in their countries of origin, but they failed to understand that such centers had developed with the influence of several factors over a long period of time. As a result, colonial Virginia may have appeared rural by their European standards, yet that is not to say that urbanization was not present. Virginia did know a form of urbanization and its character reflected the nature of the colony, not of Europe.

The problem with regard to the character of urban development in colonial Virginia, then, is to create a framework in which to study the problem that does not incorporate the bias of contemporary European observations. Such a framework can be created through the application of theories from the urban and geographical disciplines in an historical context. But before this model can be created, a clear definition of terms is needed.

It is glaringly apparent that the terms "town," "city" and "urbanization" have been used interchangeably in this introduction. Yet, if the theories of other disciplines are to be useful to the historian, precise theoretical definitions must be adopted. The first question logically asks, what is urbanization?

The term urbanization denotes the growth of city

characteristics, as opposed to rural characteristics. But in the realm of urban theory, it is a dynamic process of growth beyond rural life styles not limited by time or space. Urbanization affects not simply one area, the boundaries of a town or city, but the entire society. "As long as we identify urbanism with the physical entity of the city, viewing it merely as rigidly delimited in space, and proceed as if urban attributes abruptly ceased to be manifested beyond an arbitrary boundary line, we are not likely to arrive at any adequate conception of urbanism as a mode of life."[15]

One of the obvious characteristics of urbanization involves population concentration since population numbers are used to identify cities and towns from rural areas. "Urbanization is a process of becoming. It is a movement, not necessarily direct or steady or continuous, from a state of non-urbanism toward a state of complete urbanism, or rather from a state of less concentration toward a state of more concentration."[16] But, a society must meet one condition before urbanization can occur. The level of agricultural production must reach beyond the subsistence level

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[15]Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," American Journal of Sociology 44 (July, 1938): 4.

[16]Hope Tisdale, "The Process of Urbanization," Social Forces 20 (1942): 312.

to allow a segment of the population to pursue urban life. This means that urbanization is not a spontaneous process, but one that involves the gradual accumulations of society.[17]

So far, we have tried to define the process of urbanization and explain what is necessary for urbanization to occur. But the nature of urbanization has not been identified.

Urbanization is basically an economic mechanism. Economic activity is common to all urban units for it not only brings the resources necessary for the unit's continued development, but it also unites rural and urban areas. Goods and services are exported from the urban area in return for goods and services from outside the urban area. "Interactions between cities and their hinterlands can be studied through the actual flow of goods and services, as well as the related flows of money and credit."[18] The urban unit, then, cannot exist in an isolated situation. It must be discussed in terms of its relation to its surroundings. And, the growth of communications and transportation systems, two items that affect economic growth,

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[17] Ibid., pp. 312-314.

[18] Harold M. Mayer, "A Survey of Urban Geography," Philip M. Hauser and Leo F. Schnore, eds. The Study of Urbanization (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1966), p. 83.

will help to determine the growth of the urban unit (along with the resources available to the hinterland). "Wherever economic activity is the greatest, urbanization will be the greatest."[19]

But economic activity is not the sole function of urbanization as urban units often have political/administrative functions, such as borough, city, county, state or national seats of government. Cultural activities, theater, music, fine arts and religious activities, churches and diocesan sees, may also be functions of urbanization. An urban unit almost always may be classified as an economic unit, but this does not eliminate the presence of other major activities.[20]

Urbanization, then, is a dynamic process of growth beyond rural life styles not limited by time or space. A specific urban unit may be identified by population concentration and usually functions as an economic unit, although other activities may be present. But urbanization is a process that involves interaction with the entire society, not simply one segment living within the physical boundaries

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[19]Kingsley Davis, "The Origin and Growth of Urbanization in the World," The American Journal of Sociology 60 (1955): 435.

[20]John Beaujeu-Garnier and George Chabot, Urban Geography (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1967), p. 106.

of a town or city.

Since the urban unit does not exist in a vacuum, geographical regions must affect urbanization, and the geographical contours of the area surrounding the urban unit often determine the growth of urbanization. For example, it was noted above that a surplus of agricultural goods was necessary before urban units could be built. This also means that the region surrounding the urban unit must either be able physically to produce food of some form or be conducive to transporting food on a mass basis from another region to the urban unit. But the geographical region has much more significance in the process of urbanization.

Most towns and cities begin as "mercantile outposts." They develop in certain areas that are best suited to the pursuit of this type of activity. Thus, many towns, especially those of the colonial era, began as seaports with good harbor areas. The more suited the natural geographic region was to commercial activity, the better the chances of increased urbanization.[21]

Of several theories about the relation of geography

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[21]See Brian J. L. Berry and Frank E. Horton, Geographical Perspectives on Urban Systems (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), Chapters 1-3 for full discussion of geography and urban location.

to urbanization, the one that will be used here to discuss urbanization in colonial Virginia is the "central place theory" developed by Walter Christaller in 1933.[22] The central place theory, in much simplified terms, states that an urban unit is the commercial center of a geographical region in the sense that it regulates the region's commerce. Central places vary in importance. The larger units are those that dominate larger regions, for they have more regulatory control of the commerce. The geographical area served by the central place is known as the complementary region, and it should be remembered that the relation of the urban unit to the region is always a reciprocal one. Goods flow from the unit to the region in exchange for crops and money, which allow the unit to obtain and produce more goods.[23]

This central place theory, then, implies that an urban unit can indeed exist in a rural area. As one must not incorporate contemporary European ideas into discussions of colonial urbanization, one must also take care not to interpret urban units in terms of the twentieth-century

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[22]For a detailed explanation of Christaller's theory, see John U. Marshall, The Location of Service Towns (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1969), pp. 11-43.

[23]Berry and Horton, Geographic Perspectives, pp. 171-175.

megalopolis. Urban units centralize trade and they may well appear in a rural geographical region.

The above theories of urbanization, geography and central place, then, will be used to clarify and interpret the nature of urbanization in colonial Virginia. But, if these are the theories, how are they to be applied to colonial Virginia? Such a framework is provided by the three multiple town acts of Virginia.

In 1680, 1691 and 1705, the General Assembly passed acts with the purpose of creating towns in Virginia. Each of these acts, legislated by order of the British Crown, named specific sites in every county that were to become towns. They detailed the methods for building the towns and enacted several prohibitions to aid the towns in achieving permanent statuses. The towns were to be "ports of entry." All exports were to pass through the towns and all imports had to be landed in the towns before further shipment. The creation of ports of entry, it was hoped, would both centralize the collection of customs duties and aid the economic growth of the towns.

But the acts were legislative failures. They did not centralize trade and were repealed by royal authority. While the acts were unsuccessful, the majority of the towns were not. Twenty-seven towns were created by the three

acts. Of these, seventeen survived the colonial period.

It is important to note that these acts legislatively created twenty-seven units that are towns by statutory definition, not solely by definition of contemporary observations. A bias, though, is still present. By nature of the town acts, we are only studying Tidewater Virginia and, therefore, any results are only applicable to this area. With this caveat in mind, it is still possible to investigate and analyze these towns and attempt to expose the character of urbanization through the application of theories from disciplines other than history.

A town, then, has been defined as a settlement unit that has diversified from farming. It has a function, determined by its geographic location and supported by its inhabitants. Thus, the twenty-seven legislated towns can be discussed in terms of their functions. But the growth of towns can also be determined through stage analysis. Theorists explain that there are seven major stages that describe a town's growth. A stage is determined by such factors as grid formation, number of functions and distinctions of areas. The seven groupings are:[24]

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[24]Griffith Taylor, "Urban Geography," Griffith Taylor, ed., Geography in the Twentieth Century (New York: Philosophical Library, Inc., 1953), p. 524.

Stage	Description
1. Sub-infantile	one street; no differentiation between residential and functional areas
2. Infantile	beginnings of street grid system
3. Juvenile	fairly clear segregation of commercial areas in center of town; residential on outskirts
4. Adolescent	further segregation of areas; multiple (more than two) functions
5. Mature	distinct residential and functional areas; segregation of wealthy and poor; multiple functions
6. Late Mature	attempts at replanning for improvement
7. Senile	decay and abandonment

To apply these terms to the colonial towns of Virginia is difficult. The data required by this system are not available for some of the towns. Moreover, the system uses relative terms. The difference between "fairly clear segregation of areas" and "distinct segregation of areas" is subjective. Yet the application of the seven stages to the legislated towns, even though imperfect, is a useful procedure to understand their relative growth. When combined with functional analysis, stage analysis provides the necessary information to describe the urban character of Virginia.

Through this system of investigations, it becomes apparent that urbanization, as defined earlier, was of some significance in colonial Virginia. The legislation, although repealed, created a chain of units in Tidewater Virginia that performed urban functions. These towns were "local urban centers" or "central places." They provided the neighborhood with places in which to buy and sell goods. That they were not large units in terms of population and physical size is not relevant. They existed, in terms of stage analysis, and they provided important services for the community in terms of functional analysis.[25]

In order to understand fully this interpretation, we must first study the provisions of the three acts that created the towns. Chapter II supplies this information. Chapter III presents the histories of the twenty-seven legislated towns. Emphasis is not placed on the events in these towns in the colonial years, but on the factors which tell us of their nature. The data supplied by these histories are interpreted in Chapter IV. And, the final chapter outlines the character of urbanization as seen through these towns. It will become obvious that towns existed and that they provided major services.

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[25]See Chapter IV for the application of stage analysis and functional analysis to these towns and for a full discussion of the Virginia geographical region.

CHAPTER II

THE MULTIPLE TOWN ACTS

1680

On June 8, 1680, the royal governor, Thomas Lord Culpeper, read to the General Assembly the royal instructions for the colony of Virginia. Among the items mentioned by Culpeper, was the concern of the Crown "on the necessity of haveing one or more towns, in this Country without which noe other nation ever begunne a plantacon, or any yet thrived (as it ought)."[1] Culpeper's instructions requested the building of one market town and port for each of the four major rivers in Virginia.[2] Instead, the General Assembly passed an act entitled, "An Act for Cohabitation and Encouragement of Trade and Manufacture,"[3] which created twenty towns, one in each county.

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[1]Thomas Culpeper, "His Excellencies first Speech to the Assembly begunne at James Citty June: 8th 1680," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 14 (1907): 364.

[2]Leonard Woods Labaree, ed., Royal Instructions to British Colonial Governors, 1670-1776, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1935), 2:545.

[3]William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia, 13 vols. (New York: R. & W. & G. Bartow, 1823), 2:470.

The act listed several prohibitions to aid these settlements in achieving a permanent status. After January 1, 1681, no exports from Virginia were to be made except through these port towns. And, after September 19, 1681, all imported goods must enter at these towns. Any violation of these laws would result in loss of the goods to the Crown.[4]

The legislation also created specific methods for the building of the towns. The trustees of each county were to purchase fifty acres of land at the named sites for 10,000 pounds of tobacco within two months of the act's passage. The land was to be divided into half-acre lots, which could be purchased for 100 pounds of tobacco. Within three months of buying a lot, construction of a building must have begun or ownership of the land would revert to the trustees.[5]

Yet, the act was unpopular. Shippers found the ports to be either nonexistent or inconvenient and "ignored the act and continued to trade, as before, at plantation wharves."[6] On December 12, 1681, the Commissioners of

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[4] Ibid., 2:474-477.

[5] Ibid., 2:473-474.

[6] Edward F. Heite, "Markets and Ports," Virginia Calvalcade 16 (1966): 30.

Custom prepared a list of objections to the 1680 act. They felt the act was unrealistic in its estimates of the time needed to build towns. The ports were placed "where there are no warehouses or accommodation for receiving goods, nor, indeed, any inhabitants." Yet, within six months, the towns were to be ready to receive all exports. The Commissioners also cited the objections of English traders and merchants to the act. The port towns were "burdensome to their trade and impracticable." Noting that "trade is to be courted, not forced," and that, if the act were enforced, traders would be "driven to smuggling," the Commissioners recommended that the act be "referred back to the Governor of Virginia for reconsideration."[7] Charles II suspended the act on December 21, 1681.[8]

Despite this failure, a second town act was passed by the General Assembly in April, 1691, at the urging of Sir Francis Nicholson.[9] The act directly addressed the Crown, saying that towns would end all "frauds and abuses"[10] in the collection of custom duties. While

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[7]J. W. Fortescue, ed., Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, Americas and West Indies, 31 vols. (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898, reprint ed., New York: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964), 1681-1685: 152.

[8]Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:508.

[9]Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:53-62.

[10]Ibid., 3:54.

twenty sites were again selected, only fifteen were "ports for entry and clearing."[11] The other five towns were to be "for the buying and selling of goods."[12] By October 1, 1692, all exports and imports were to pass through these fifteen port towns.[13]

A town was still to consist of fifty acres, but the trustees were to purchase the tract at a price "thought reasonable."[14] And, rather than quoting a price for the half-acre lots, the General Assembly allowed the trustees to sell the lots at cost. In addition, the buyer of a lot had four months, instead of three, in which to "build and finish. . . one good house[15] on the lot before it reverted to the trustees.

In 1692, Nicholson, who had earlier promoted the act, now urged its repeal.[16] Nicholson's change in attitude was assumed to have been caused by the commercial groups in London. Some Virginians felt he had "received

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[11] Ibid., 3:60.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 3:56.

[15] Ibid.

[16] John W. Reps, Tidewater Towns (Williamsburg, Virginia: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1972), p. 86.

direction from those English merchants who well knew that cohabitation would lessen their consigned trade."[17] Bowing to the Governor's request, the General Assembly repealed the second town act on April 1, 1693, for the reason ostensibly that the Crown had not yet expressed its approval.[18] Ironically, the Board of Trade had approved the act, on the condition of one amendment, on June 27, 1692. Their objection concerned the date of mandatory shipping. They felt it would have been better first to build the port facilities before compelling all trade to enter certain towns.[19]

The final attempt at comprehensive town legislation occurred in 1705 when the Board of Trade ordered Governor Edward Nott to have the General Assembly create towns.[20] To promote fair and regular trade, only five ports were to be built: one on each of the major rivers and two on the Eastern Shore.[21] The General Assembly responded by passing the third town act, "An Act for Establishing Ports and

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[17] Beverley, History and State of Virginia, p. 81.

[18] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:108-109.

[19] Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, 1689-1692: 611.

[20] Labaree, ed., Instructions, 2:545-546.

[21] Ibid.

Towns,"[22] which created fifteen instead of only five towns. Like the towns of the 1680 and 1691 acts, each town was to be fifty acres with lots of one-half acre in size.[23] Buyers now had twelve months in which to build a house on a lot.[24]

The 1705 act attempted to give the towns special privileges. In addition to making the towns exclusive ports, the act prohibited the building of ordinaries within ten miles of the town. Inhabitants of the town were free from all poll taxes for fifteen years and, except in times of war, were also exempted from military service outside their towns. Clearly, the Assembly hoped to make settlement in towns as attractive as possible.

However, the Board of Trade objected to the special status given town inhabitants.[26] They felt this status would promote manufactures "and take the colonists off from the Planting of Tobacco, which would be of Very Ill

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[22]Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:404-419.

[23]Ibid., 3:415.

[24]Ibid., 3:418.

[25]Ibid., 3:406-407.

[26]William P. Palmer, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781, 12 vols. (Richmond: R. F. Walker, Superintendent of Public Printing, 1875), 1:138.

consequence."[27] As a result, on July 5, 1710, the General Assembly, by direct order of Queen Anne, repealed the 1705 town act.

Thus ended Virginia's attempts at mass legislation of towns. The acts won legislative approval and support in Virginia, but they were unacceptable in Britain. The royal government received considerable pressure to repeal the laws from the English merchants. Their consignment trade was too valuable to allow its destruction by the town acts.[28] Virginia did not obtain ports of entry, but the merchants did retain their trade patterns.

The aim of the legislation of 1680, 1691 and 1705 had been the creation of towns. The General Assembly arbitrarily chose sites and gave them purposes, or functions, by designating them ports of entry or trade centers. With the repeal of the acts the towns should no longer have had functions or legal status. Yet, for a majority of the towns, this simply was not true.

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Riley, "Town Acts," p. 314.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL SKETCHES OF TOWNS DESIGNATED IN THE MULTIPLE TOWN ACTS

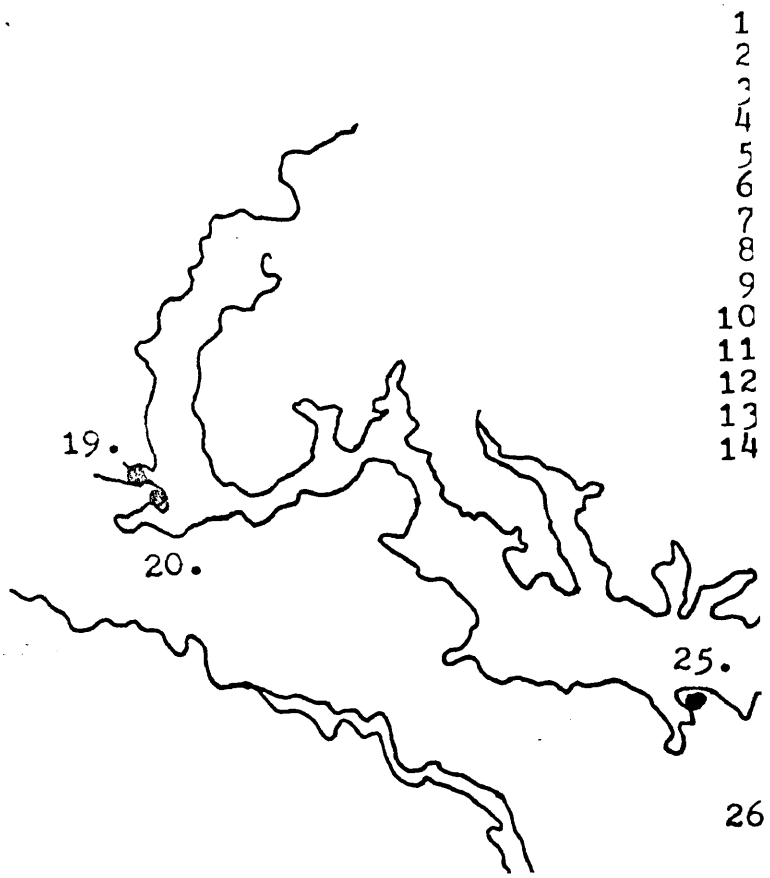
As explained in Chapter I, the histories of the twenty-seven sites designated towns by the General Assembly statutes provide a series of test cases which detail the information necessary to compile a functional and state analysis of urbanization in colonial Virginia. The created towns are (see Map 1):[1]

[1]Those towns designated with an asterisk existed through the colonial period.

County	Years Listed	Town
Accomack	1680,'91,'05	*Onancock
Charles City	1680,'91,'05	*Flowerdew Hundred
Elizabeth City	1680,'91,'05	*Hampton
Gloucester	1680,'91	*Tindals Point
Gloucester	1705	Queensborough
Henrico	1680	*Varina
Henrico	1691	*Bermuda Hundred
Isle of Wight	1680,'91	Patesfield
James City	1680,'91,'05	Jamestown
Lancaster	1680,'91	*Queenstown
Lower Norfolk	1680,'91,'05	*Norfolk
Middlesex	1680,'91,'05	*Urbanna
Nansemond	1680,'91,'05	Nansemond
New Kent	1680	*"at Brick House"
Northampton	1680,'91,'05	Northampton
Northumberland	1680,'91	Chickacony
Northumberland	1705	New-Castle
Rappahannock	1680,'91,'05	*Tappahannock
Stafford	1680	Peace Point
Stafford	1691,'05	*Marlborough
Surry	1680	"at Smiths Fort"
Surry	1691	*"at Grays Creek"
Upper York	1691,'05	*Delaware
Warwick	1680,'91	*Warwick Town
Westmoreland	1680,'91	"at Nomenie"
Westmoreland	1705	*Kinsale
York	1680,'91,'05	*Yorktown

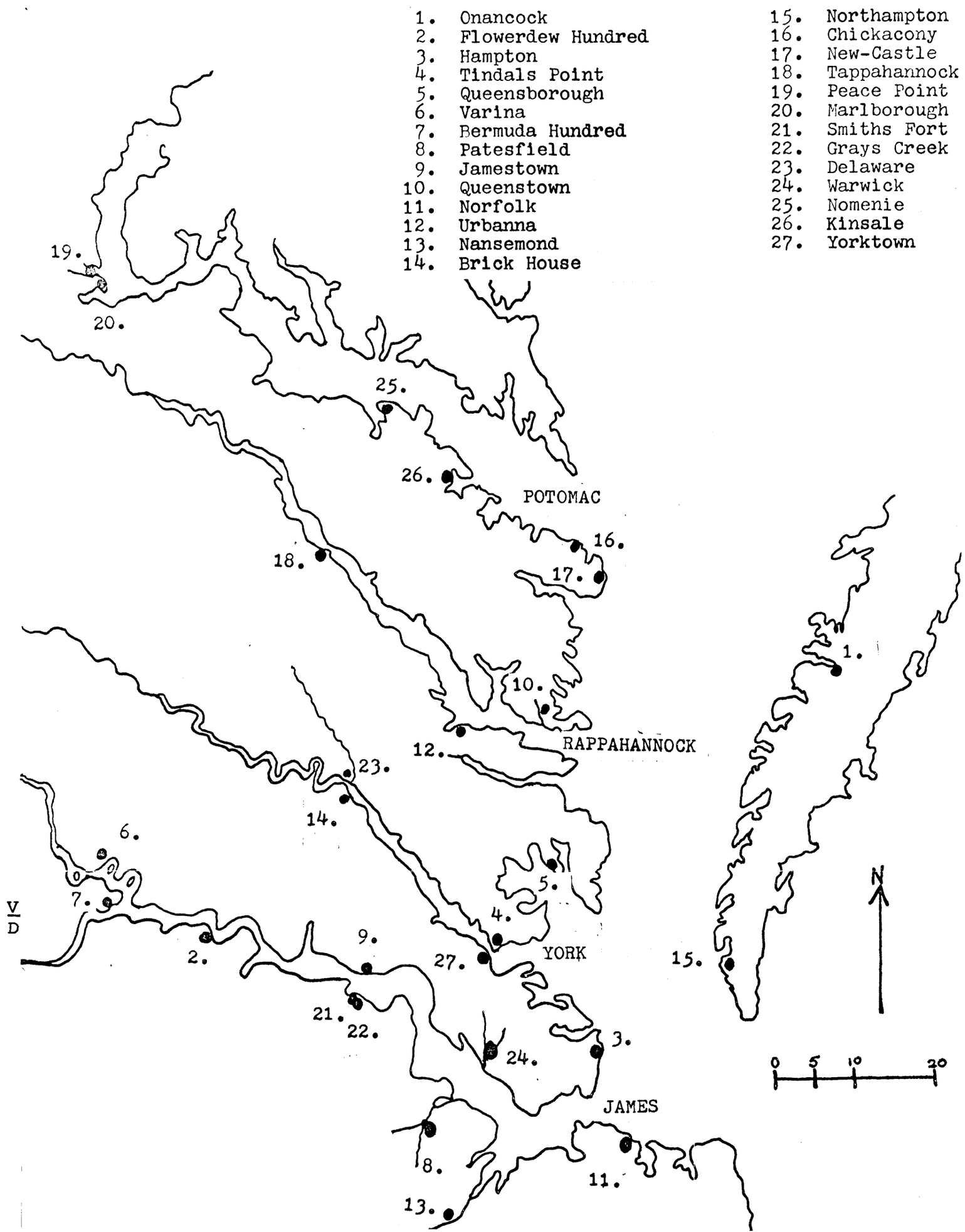
These histories do not emphasize events of the colonial period that occurred in the towns, but the factors and elements of the towns' histories that reflect their functions, stages and relationships to the entire colony. These are not comprehensive histories but ones that seek answers to a specific set of questions. We need to know when people began to settle and what sorts of activities they performed at these sites, when and how grid formations appeared, and the reasons that were recognized

MAP 1.



Towns Established in Virginia, 1680-1705. (After Virginia 1974, Official State Highway Map, Virginia Department of Highways.)

MAP 1.


1. Onancock
2. Flowerdew Hundred
3. Hampton
4. Tindals Point
5. Queensborough
6. Varina
7. Bermuda Hundred
8. Patesfield
9. Jamestown
10. Queenstown
11. Norfolk
12. Urbanna
13. Nansemond
14. Brick House
15. Northampton
16. Chickacony
17. New-Castle
18. Tappahannock
19. Peace Point
20. Marlborough
21. Smiths Fort
22. Grays Creek
23. Delaware
24. Warwick
25. Nomenie
26. Kinsale
27. Yorktown
POTOMAC
RAPPAHANNOCK
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by contemporaries for the prosperity or poverty of the towns. This is the type of information that can describe the character of urbanization.[2]

Accomack County

Onancock

The 1680 act for cohabitation designated "att Colverts neck on the northwest side att the head of an Anchor Creeke"[3] the site for a town and port of entry for Accomack County. This location is an irregular peninsula formed by the north and south branches of Onancock Creek and had been known to Englishmen since 1608.

In 1608, Captain John Smith headed a party that investigated and mapped the Eastern Shore. He named the site of the future Onancock, "Keale Hill," in honor of his aid, Richard Keale.[4] This area of the Eastern Shore

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[2]The histories are presented in the alphabetical order of the counties in which they appeared at the time of their enactment.

[3]Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473.

[4]Norma Miller Truman, Eastern Shore of Virginia, 1603-1964 (Onancock, Virginia: The Eastern Shore News, Inc., 1964), p. 4.

was inhabited by the Onancock (a corruption of "auwan-naku")[5] Indians whose leader was Ekees.[6] Ekees seems to have welcomed the Englishmen for, in a few years, a number were living in the area. The oldest known house is Scott Hall, which stands on the present Market Street. It was built in 1640 by Henry Bagwell, a burgess and first clerk of Accomack County, 1632-1640.[7] Although the order to create a town for this site was given in 1680, by the 1670's, the site held the county courthouse and a tobacco warehouse, and was known as Onancock.[8]

In 1681, John West and William Custis, serving as trustees, purchased fifty acres from Charles Scarburgh, for the prescribed rate of 10,000 pounds of tobacco.[9] Daniel Jenifer was employed to survey the tract into lots and received 540 pounds of tobacco for his work.[10] (See Map 2.) Although it is not known how many lots were

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[5]Raus McDill Hanson, Virginia Place Names, Derivations, Historical Uses (Verona, Virginia: McClure Printing Co., Inc., 1969), p. 23.

[6]Leonora W. Wood, Guide to Virginia's Eastern Shore (Richmond, Virginia: The Dietz Press, Inc., 1952), p. 30.

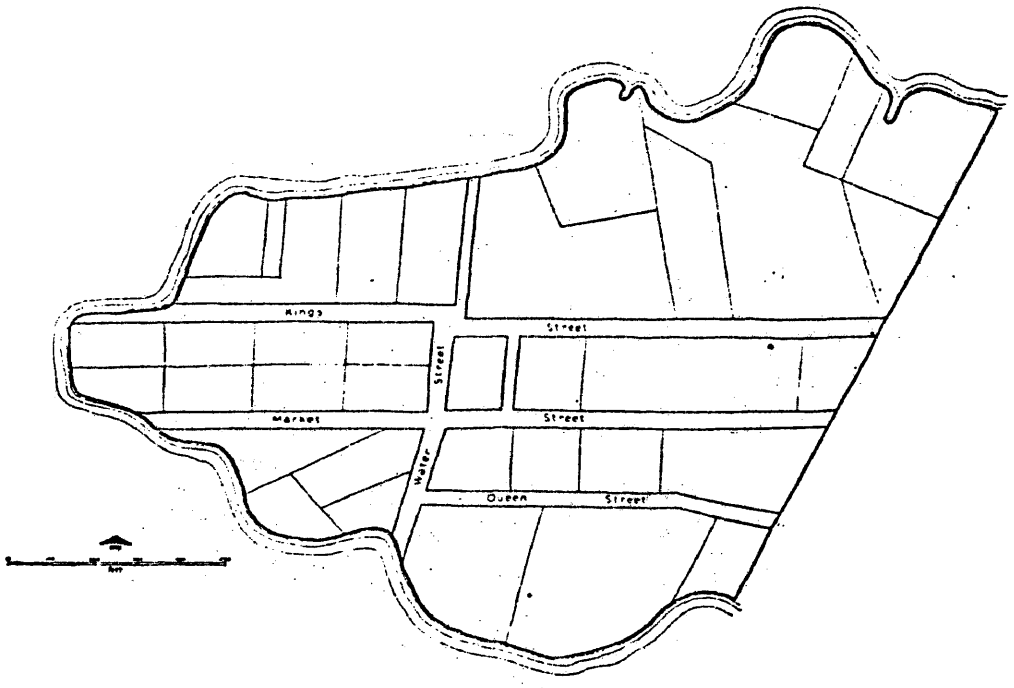
[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 70.

[10]Ibid.

MAP 2.



Plan of Onancock, Virginia, 1681. (John W. Reps, Tidewater Towns (Williamsburg, Virginia: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1972), p. 70.)

purchased, the buyers had sufficient numbers and interest to build a new courthouse and a church before news of the repeal of the act reached Virginia in 1682.[11]

Building seems to have continued after the act's repeal. The building known today as Makemie House, on Market Street, was built in 1684 as the first licensed Presbyterian Meeting House in America.[12] And, in 1691, when the General Assembly designated the site a second time as a port of entry, it noted that the "Court house, several dwelling houses, and ware houses"[13] were in use at the site.

In 1705, the site again was made an official port for the colony of Virginia. Despite the lack of official recognition as a town unit, Onancock had grown since 1691, and was now a busy commercial and fishing center.[14] The repeal of the 1705 act, as the acts of 1680 and 1691, made no impression upon the growth of the town.

Yet, Onancock seems not to have been as prosperous as its counterparts in Tidewater Virginia. A traveler in

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Wood, Guide to Eastern Shore, p. 31.

[13] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:59.

[14] Wood, Guide to Eastern Shore, p. 30.

1736, comparing the Eastern Shore to the rest of Virginia, noted that the Eastern Shore contained "no considerable Towns. . . only a few scatter'd Hamlets, particularly at the Court Houses of the two Counties."[15]

Onancock remained at this level through most of the colonial period. It was a shipping and fishing center, as well as the county seat. Although the courthouse was moved to Drunnontown (Accomac) in 1786, Onancock continued to be a small commercial center for the county.[16]

Charles City County

Flowerdew Hundred

The town for Charles City County in all three town acts was directed to be built at Flowerdew Hundred. There is no evidence that a town was ever built here as a result of legislation, but the site was a plantation and a trading center.

The site was originally a gift to Sir George Yeardley from the Indians in 1617.[17] In 1618, Yeardley

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[15] Americus, "Observations in Several Voyages and Travels in America in the Year 1736," (London, 1746) William and Mary Quarterly (first series) 15 (1907): 217.

[16] Wood, Guide to Eastern Shore, p. 30.

[17] "Flowerdew Hundred and Sir George Yardley," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine 2 (1920): 115-116.

patented 1,000 acres and named the land "Flowerdew" in honor of his wife, Temperance Flowerdew. By the next year, Flowerdew was represented in the first General Assembly by Edmund Rossingham and John Jefferson, indicating that Flowerdew was now a settlement. By 1624, when Yeardley sold his tract to Captain Abraham Peirsey, twelve homes, three storehouses, four tobacco houses, and one windmill were on the site. By the time of the town acts the land was held by Captain John Taylor.[18]

While no formal building accompanied the enactment of the town acts at Flowerdew, the site did have activity. A ferry operated from the site[19] and there were, possibly, a few stores.[20] Flowerdew Hundred was not a major settlement town. It did not grow into a major port city. But it was a small trading center for a portion of the south side of the James River. The reasons for its decline in the nineteenth century are not known.

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Parke Rose, Jr., Traveling the Roads and Waterways of Early Virginia (reprint from The Iron Worker; Lynchburg, Virginia: A Mead Company, 1973), p. 7.

[20] Virginia Gazette, December 19, 1755, p. 3, col. 1.

Elizabeth City County

Hampton

Although the General Assembly ordered in 1680 that a town was to be created "in Elizabeth Citty county on the westside Hampton river on Mr. Thomas Jervise his plantation where he now lives,"[21] the site had been an English settlement since 1610. In fact, this area had been known to Englishmen before Jamestown. On April 30, 1607, John Smith and his men landed at the site, then known as the Indian village "Kecoughtan," decided it was unsuitable for English settlement and sailed on to what became Jamestown.[22]

Kecoughtan (meaning "inhabitants of the great town"[23]) had an Indian population of about one thousand in the early seventeenth century.[24] The English, fearing this large concentration of the enemy, forced the Indians from Kecoughtan in 1610. On July 19, 1610, Sir Thomas Gates ordered a military fort be erected to prevent the

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[21]Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:472.

[22]Gillie Cary McCabe, The Story of an Old Town, Hampton, Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Old Dominion Press, 1929), p. 11.

[23]Hanson, Virginia Place Names, p. 221.

[24]Ibid.

Indians' return.[25] He renamed Kecoughtan "Southampton," in honor of the Earl of Southampton.[26] Three names were associated with the tract throughout the colonial period: Kecoughtan, Southampton, or simply Hampton.[27]

After the Indian village was destroyed, Hampton was a military outpost for two or three years. The fort included a small farm where corn for the inhabitants of Jamestown was grown.[28] In 1616, John Rolfe estimated Hampton contained only twenty men and boys and, if any were there, he gave no count of the women.[29]

In 1620, the name of the fort was again changed. It was now to be known as "Elizabeth City" in honor of the daughter of King James I.[30] But Hampton seems to have remained the preferred name. By 1629, the governor and council had appointed court commissioners for Elizabeth

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[25]Mrs. William W. Richardson, Chronology of Hampton and Vicinity (Hampton (?): Daughters of the American Revolution, 1918), p. 1.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid.

[28]Marion L. Starkey, The First Plantation (Hampton, Virginia: Houston Printing and Publishing House, 1936), p. 10.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Richardson, Chronology, p. 2.

City County, the center being Hampton.[31] By 1633, Hampton had a tobacco warehouse for the inspection of the county's produce.[32]

Schools were also built in Hampton. In 1634, Benjamin Syms left his estate "for the maintenance of a learned and honest man to keep. . . a free school for the education and instruction of the children of the adjoining parishes of Elizabeth City and Kicoughtan."[33] And in 1659, Thomas Eaton endowed a second school.[34] Thus, by 1680, Hampton was already a well-established urban unit with courts, warehouses and schools.

In 1680, Hampton became an official port of entry by the legislation of the General Assembly. The port town was to be built on land adjacent to the courthouse of Hampton, land owned by Thomas Jarvis. It is doubtful that this new fifty acre tract was surveyed for a town, for when Hampton was again created a port of entry in 1691, the county trustees again purchased the land from its new owner,

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[31] Starkey, First Plantation, p. 11.

[32] Ibid.

[33] "Will of Benjamin Syms, February 12, 1634," quoted in McCabe, Old Town, p. 19.

[34] McCabe, Old Town, p. 20.

William Wilson.[35] This time, the new Hampton seems to have been developed, for by 1698, twenty-six of the new lots had been sold.[36] The county tithables (all white men between the ages of sixteen and sixty, and all Negro men and women) had increased from 365 in 1693 to 410 in 1698.[37] That same year, a special constable was appointed to the town.[38]

The General Assembly again named Hampton the official port for Elizabeth City County in 1705. Hampton was large enough then for the Assembly to also order the county to build a network of public roads leading to the town.[39] Two ferries also operated from Hampton.[40] Thus, Hampton had become both an important trade and communications center by the early eighteenth century.

In 1716, a traveler described Hampton as the "place

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[35]Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 70.

[36]Lyon G. Tyler, History of Hampton and Elizabeth City County, Virginia (Hampton, Virginia: The Board of Supervisors of Elizabeth City County, 1922), p. 29.

[37]Starkey, First Plantation, p. 17.

[38]Philip Alexander Bruce, Economic History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, 2 vols. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1907), 2:560.

[39]Starkey, First Plantation, p. 40.

[40]Rouse, Traveling the Roads, p. 7.

of the greatest trade in all Virginia."[41] Most of the ships anchored at Hampton were from New York, Pennsylvania or Maryland.[42] But only small ships could dock at the wharves. The bay was "not navigable for large ships, by reason of a bar of land. . . between the mouth. . . and the main channel."[43] The town had about one hundred houses, "few of them of any note, and no church."[44] The visitor also found Hampton to be unpleasant "owing to the great mud-banks and wet marshes about it, which have a very unwholesome smell at low water."[45]

Improvements continued as the town grew. In 1734, precautions against fires were implemented which included the replacement of all wooden chimneys.[46] And, in 1751, John Bushnell completed the building of a larger public wharf.[47]

But Hampton's success and growth was hindered by

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[41]Ann Maury, ed., Memoirs of a Huguenot Family (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), p. 293.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid.

[45]Ibid.

[46]Starkey, First Plantation, p. 43.

[47]Ibid.

the Revolutionary War. On September 2, 1775, the first battle of the war in Virginia took place at Hampton. A storm had forced British Captain Mathew Squiers to bring his ship, the Otter, into port. The local militia seized the ship on the excuse "the captain had been raiding the neighborhood for provender."[48] Squiers and his men were soon released.

Fearing an attack from Squiers and Lord Dunmore's fleet, the inhabitants of Hampton blocked the entrance to the river by sinking five ships in the channel. On October 24, 1775, Squiers began firing upon Hampton from a point just beyond the blockaded harbor. Several buildings were damaged by fire.

In the morning the Williamsburg militia arrived in Hampton and managed to convince Squiers to leave.[49] Two of Squiers men were killed, two wounded, and several were taken prisoner. An American contemporary account of the battle stated: "It is very remarkable, and ought to be looked upon as an instance of the divine protection, that not one of our men was even wounded in the several attacks."[50]

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[48] Ibid., p. 46.

[49] Ibid., p. 47.

[50] Virginia Gazette, Pi, October 26, 1775, p. 3., col. 2.

For the rest of the war, Hampton's trade business suffered considerably.[51] Raids by both American and British forces made the docking of ships difficult, if not impossible. In 1781, the county courthouse was taken over by the French for a hospital, and the court moved elsewhere.[52] (For the Hampton plan in 1781, see Map 3.)

The extent of the loss Hampton suffered as a result of the war can be verified by a traveler's description of the town in 1796. The town then contained only thirty houses and was "a dirty disagreeable place."[53] Hampton, the oldest continually occupied English settlement in America, had been one of the most prosperous towns in colonial Virginia. Yet, by 1800, it had failed considerably.

Gloucester County

Tindals Point

Gloucester Point, or Tindals Point, as it was known in the colonial period, was named as a town and port of entry in the 1680 and 1691 General Assembly acts. The

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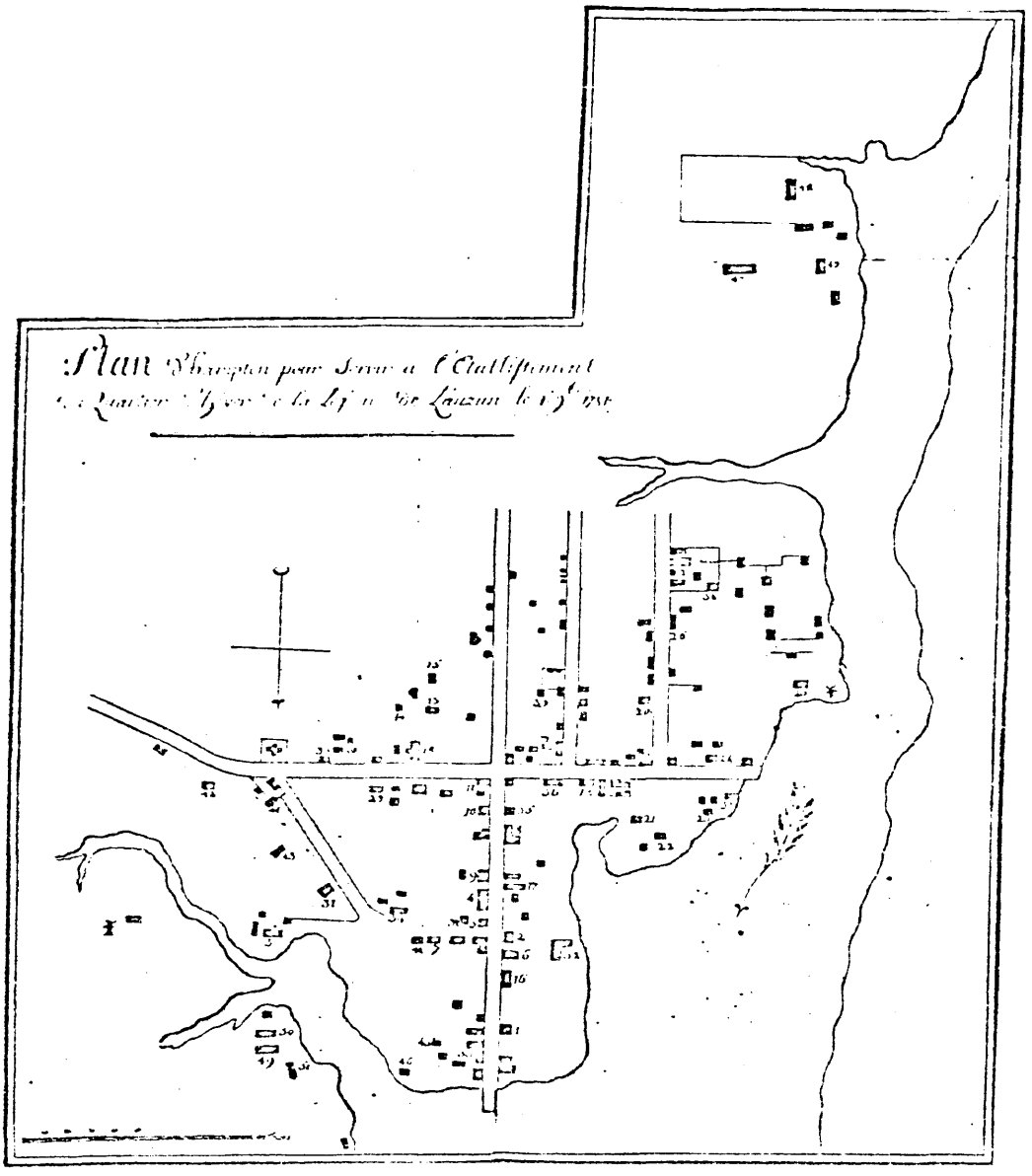
[51] Starkey, First Plantation, p. 47.

[52] Ibid., p. 48.

[53] Isaac Weld, Travels Through the States of North America, 1:169; quoted in Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 70.

MAP 3.



Frenchman's Plan of Hampton, Virginia, 1781. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 71.)

site had been a military outpost since 1607,[54] and the General Assembly had considered moving the capital from Jamestown to Tindals Point in 1677.[55] Yet, in 1680, the site was still farmland.

The first known survey of the town was made in 1707 by Miles Carey for the trustees Robert Porteous and Nathanael Burwell.[56] (See Map 4.) The population of Tindals Point in the colonial period is not known, but in 1724, Hugh Jones considered it among the best towns, equal to Williamsburg, York (present Yorktown) and Hampton.[57] An Englishman, writing in 1736, agreed with this evaluation.[58] Yet, drawings made in the mid-eighteenth century by a sailor show Tindals Point to be much smaller than Yorktown.[59] By 1750, the shipping business of this part of the York River seems to have been won by Yorktown, resulting in the decay of Tindals Point.

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[54]Hanson, Virginia Place Names, p. 92.

[55]Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 54.

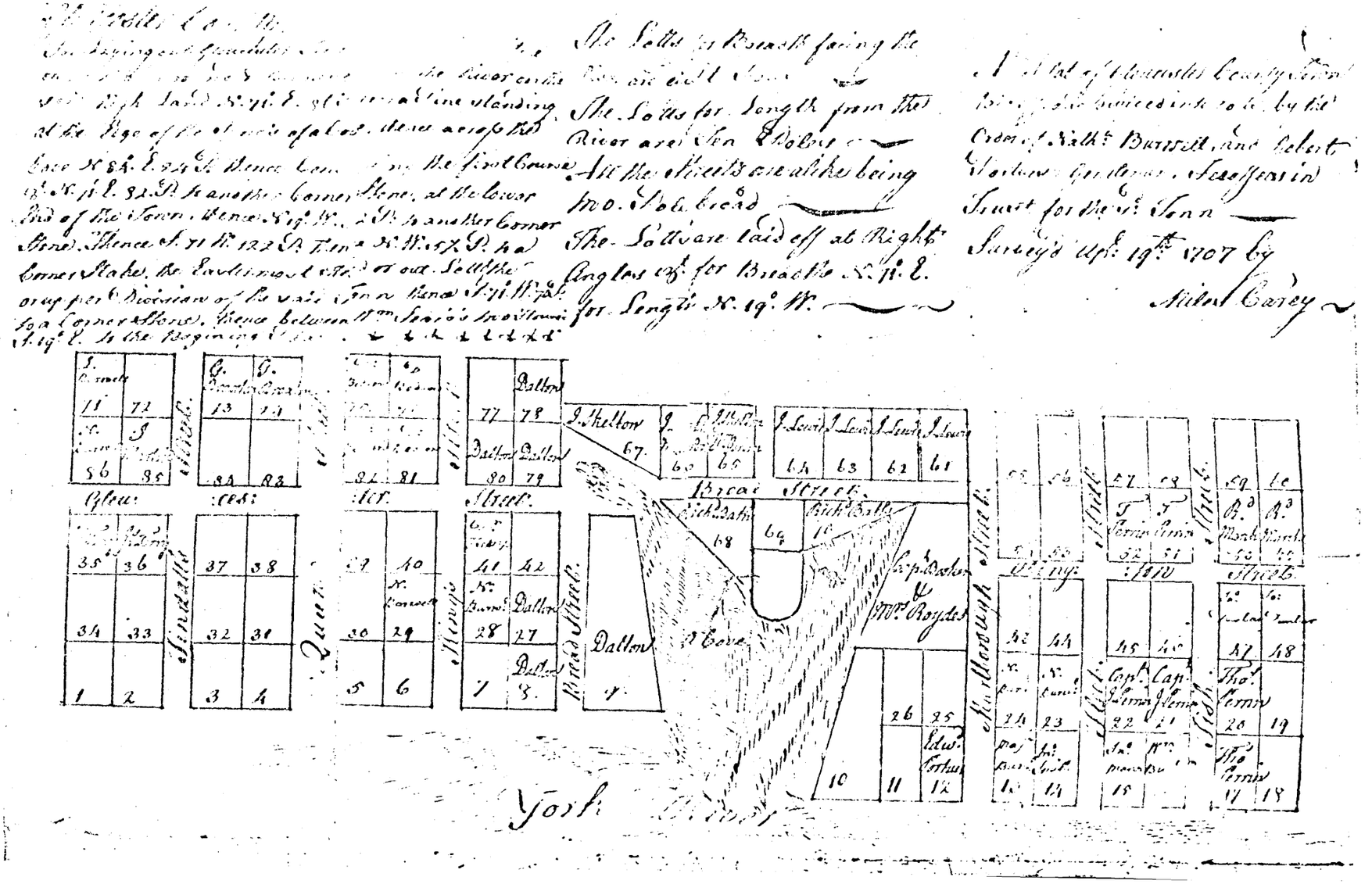
[56]Ibid., p. 89.

[57]Jones, Present State of Virginia, p. 74.

[58]Americus, "Observations," p. 223.

[59]Heite, "Markets and Ports," p. 33.

MAP 4.



Plan of Tindals Point, 1707. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 88.)

By 1796, the town contained "only ten or twelve houses."[60]

Gloucester County

Queensborough

In 1705, the General Assembly moved the designated town site for Gloucester County from Tindals Point to the "North River in Mockjack Bay, at Blackwater"[61] and named the new town Queensborough, in honor of Queen Anne. It is possible that the change of locations never took place for the Jefferson-Fry map, published in the middle of the eighteenth century, shows no indication of Queensborough. (See Map 5.) Or, if the town did begin, it may not have prospered for the same reason that Tindals Point declined. Yorktown simply overpowered any other port in the area. Yorktown had the better natural harbor and, therefore, gained the trade of the York River area.

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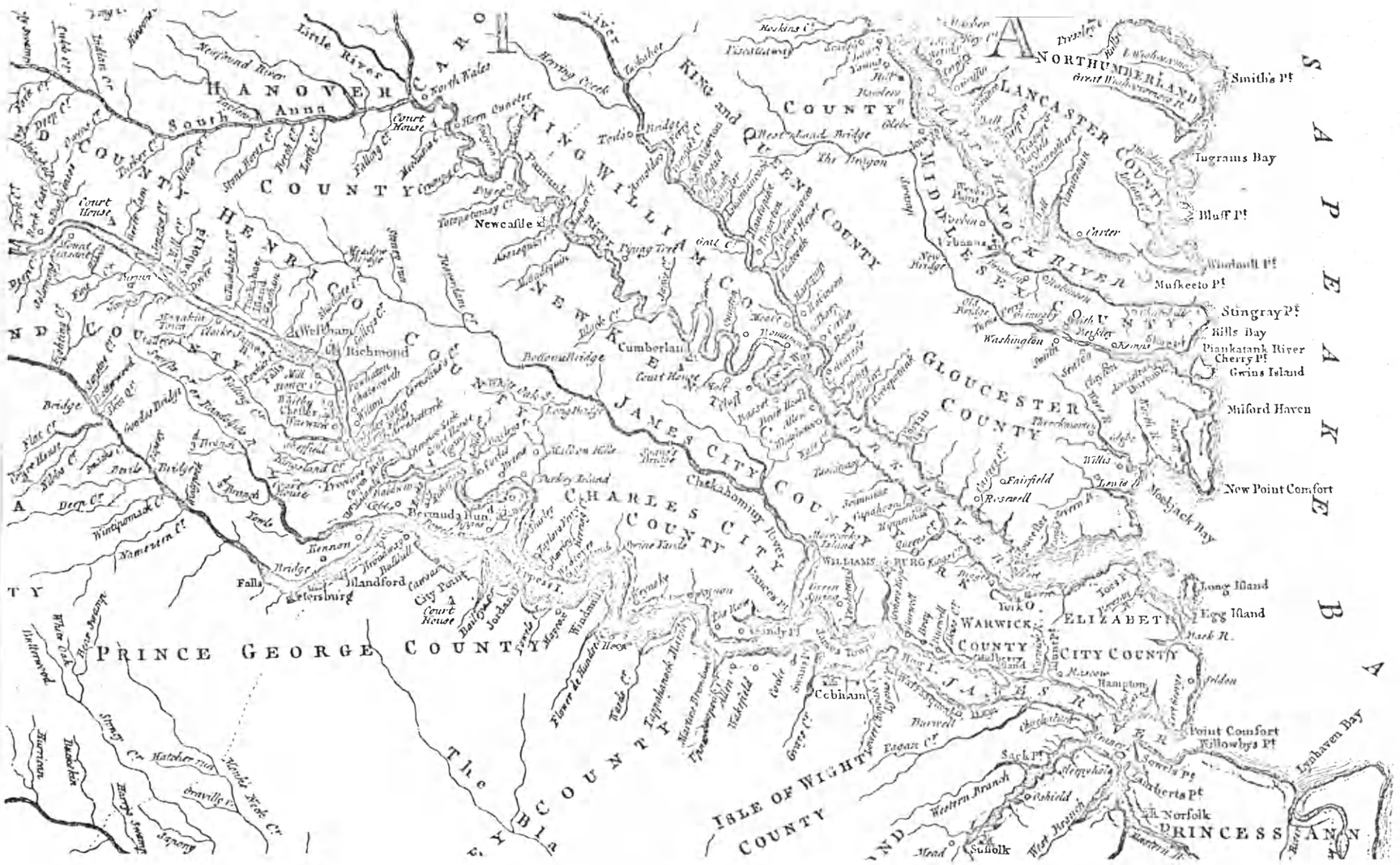
[60] Alfred J. Morrison, ed., Travels in Virginia in Revolutionary Times (1769-1802) (Lynchburg, Virginia: J. P. Bell Co., 1922), p. 97.

[61] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:415.

MAP 5.


HANOVER COUNTY
KING WILLIAM COUNTY
KING and QUEEN COUNTY
NEW KENT COUNTY
HENRICO COUNTY
CHESTERFIELD COUNTY
JAMES CITY COUNTY
CHARLES CITY COUNTY
PRINCE GEORGE COUNTY
NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY
LANCASTER COUNTY
MIDDLESEX COUNTY
GLOUCESTER COUNTY
WARWICK COUNTY
ELIZABETH CITY COUNTY
ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY
PRINCESS ANN
Richmond
Petersburg
Cumberland
Newcastle
Williamsburg
Smith's Pt
Ingrams Bay
Bluff Pt
Windmill Pt
Muskeeto Pt
Stingray Pt
Rills Bay
Piankatank River
Cherry Pt
Gwins Island
Milford Haven
New Point Comfort
Moobjack Bay
Long Island
Egg Island
Point Comfort
Willoughbys Pt
Lynhaven Bay
Sandy Pt
Roberts Pt
Norfolk
Suffolk
Chickahominy River
Appomattox River
James River
Rappahannock River
Mattapony River
Pamunkey River
Little River
Matapony River
Chickahominy R.
Western Branch
Mark R.
Hampton
Elizabeth R.
Nansemond R.
Blackwater R.
Meherrin R.
Roanoke R.
Dan R.
Staunton R.
Pagan Cr.
Warwick R.
Queens Cr.
Yorktown
Fairfield
Rosewell
Bermuda Hundred
City Point
Falling Cr.
Swift Run Cr.
Stony Run Cr.
Deep Cr.
Flat Cr.
Bridge
Court House
Ferry
Bridge
Tavern
Church
Mill
Creek
Run
Swamp
Point
Island
Hill
Plantation
Landing
Warehouse
Meeting House
Ordinary
Iron Works
Furnace
Glebe
Parish
Chapel
Quarter
Manor
Seat
Old Field
Old Town
Old Fort
Old Church
Old Mill
Old Ferry
Old Store
Old Tavern
Old Court House
Old Meeting House
Old Iron Works
Old Furnace
Old Glebe
Old Parish
Old Chapel
Old Quarter
Old Manor
Old

Henrico County

Varina

The 1680 General Assembly act named "Verina, where the courthouse is"[62] as the site for the town and port of Henrico County. As Varina was listed only once in all the multiple town acts, it can be assumed that Varina was not deemed a suitable site for a town. Yet, in the colonial period, the site known as Varina did hold physical buildings and perform services usually associated with a town.

The term "Varina" was first the name of the farm owned by John Rolfe and Pocahontas in the early seventeenth century. The term came from the tobacco Rolfe grew, a tobacco judged to be equal to the Varina tobacco from Spain.[63] The first deeds of title to land using the term Varina date from the mid-1630's.[64] It is probable that these lands had been part of the Rolfe plantation tract, giving the general area the name. It was during this period that the county seat for Henrico County was created

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[62] Ibid., 2:472.

[63] Emmie Ferguson Farrar, Old Virginia Houses Along the James (New York: Bonanza Books, 1957), p. 57.

[64] Hanson, Virginia Place Names, p. 106.

and named Varina. It remained the county seat until 1752.[65] Immediately after the enactment of the 1680 town act, Varina Parish was created. It existed to about 1714, when it was then subdivided.[66]

In 1680, then, Varina was the county courthouse, a parish, and the name of a general area in Henrico County. During the eighteenth century, a ferry ran on the James River from the site of the Varina courthouse.[67] Newspaper accounts show that as late as 1773, the Varina ferry was still in operation, although the county seat had been moved.[68]

Henrico County

Bermuda Hundred

Between 1680 and 1691, it was decided that Varina was not a suitable place for the town and port of Henrico County, and in 1691, "Bermuda hundred poynt, on the land

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[65] Ibid.

[66] Morgan P. Robinson, "Henrico Parish in the Diocese of Virginia," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 43 (1935): 17.

[67] Rouse, Traveling the Roads, p. 7.

[68] Virginia Gazette, PD, January 14, 1773, p. 2, col. 3.

belonging to the wife of John Woodson"[69] on the James River was designated as the new site for the town. Like Varina, Bermuda Hundred had existed as an English settlement since the early seventeenth century.

In 1611, Sir Thomas Dale drove the Appomattox Indians from their village to prevent further raids on the nearby town of Henrico.[70] Dale then assigned three hundred indentured servants to build a town on this site[71] and named it "Bermuda City" in honor of those lives lost on ships damaged in the Bermudas.[72] In 1616, John Rolfe referred to the site as both Bermuda City and Bermuda Nether Hundred, and gave the population as 119, making it the largest English settlement in Virginia.[73]

There are no records to indicate if Bermuda Hundred expanded after 1691 as a result of the General Assembly act. But the town was a major shipping port throughout

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[69]Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:60.

[70]Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 40.

[71]Writers Program, Virginia, Virginia: A Guide to the Old Dominion (New York: Oxford University Press, 1940), p. 576.

[72]Hanson, Virginia Place Names, p. 63.

[73]Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 43.

the colonial period.[74] In the eighteenth century, contemporary newspapers note that merchants and shippers were well established in the town.[75] Several ferries were also centered at the town.[76]

Although Bermuda Hundred seems to have profited little from the town acts of the General Assembly, it was a thriving town, as it had been for the Appomattox Indians for an undetermined number of years.

Isle of Wight County

Patesfield

Patesfield was one of the few towns built solely as a result of the town legislation of 1680. That act called for creation of a town in Isle of Wight County "at Pates ffield att the parting of Pagan Creeke,"[77] near the old Indian village of Warrascoyak.[78] The county appointed

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[74]Writers Program, Virginia, p. 576.

[75]See Virginia Gazette, PD, January 8, 1767, p. 3, col. 2; R, October 19, 1769, supplement, p. 2, col. 1; PD, February 17, 1774, p. 3, col. 2; as examples of local business.

[76]Rouse, Traveling the Roads, p. 7.

[77]Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:472.

[78]John Bennett Bodie, Seventeenth-Century Isle of Wight County, Virginia (Chicago: Chicago Law Printing Co., 1938), p. 171.

Major Thomas Taberer and Thomas Pitt as trustees for the town.[79] They purchased fifty acres for the town from Captain Arthur Allen for the prescribed ten thousand pounds of tobacco.[80]

Some building did take place in Patesfield, for when the site was again created an official town in 1691, the General Assembly noted that the town was "payd for. . . laid out. . . and houses built."[81] In 1691, Patesfield was not named a port of entry but one of the five trading centers.

Although it was established as a commercial port, the town failed because the site was not suitable for trade. In 1776, the General Assembly declared the town lands forfeit for the "purchasers soon finding the said town would not answer the purpose for which it was intended. . . and the said town, as such, is now entirely useless to the publick or the said county."[82] Yet Patesfield must have been able to perform some service in the colonial period, for eighty-five years lapsed between its enactment and dissolution as a town.

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[79] Ibid., p. 586.

[80] Ibid., p. 587.

[81] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:60.

[82] Ibid., 9:240.

James City County

Jamestown

Jamestown, or James City as it was sometimes called in the colonial period, was founded in 1607. As the capital of the colony, it was designated as an official port of entry in all three town acts. But Jamestown was never a truly prosperous town. After the capital was moved to Williamsburg, the town faded.

After the initial "starving time," Jamestown enjoyed a boom period. In 1617, Sir Samuel Argall, on instructions of the Virginia Company, founded a settlement adjoining Jamestown, known as Pasbyhayes.[83] But, as the colonists ventured inland to healthier areas more suitable to farming, Jamestown and Pasbyhayes declined.[84]

In 1621, the Virginia Company sent William Claiborne to enlarge and develop Jamestown beyond the original fort.[85] Claiborne added two rows of houses. Yet, it was not until 1655 that the first state house was built.[86]

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[83]Henry Chandlee Forman, "The Bygone 'Subberbs of James Cittie,'" William and Mary Quarterly (second series) 20 (1940): 476.

[84]Ibid., p. 486.

[85]Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 48.

[86]Ibid., p. 51.

Archaeological evidence shows that craftsmen were present in Jamestown. The town had a lime kiln, a brick kiln, a warehouse, tile kiln, brewery and pottery kiln.[87] For most of the seventeenth century, Jamestown was the only town-trade center Virginia had.

But Jamestown never grew. Following Bacon's Rebellion in 1676 and the removal of the capital in 1698, the town ceased to have a reason for existence. By 1724, Hugh Jones described Jamestown as "nothing but an abundance of brick rubbish, and three or four good inhabited houses."[88]

The town acts of 1680, 1691 and 1705 had little effect on Jamestown. The town did not need to be built, nor did it need wharves. Rather, it needed trade and business. As no farms or plantations surrounded Jamestown, it could be of little use as a local trading center. And although it was the capital of the colony, Jamestown received little overseas trade. The London merchants shipped directly to plantation wharves.

Jamestown continued to be represented by a burgess member throughout the colonial period. Yet, for practical purposes, the town ceased to exist after 1698.

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[87] Ibid., p. 51.

[88] Jones, State of Virginia, p. 66.

Lancaster County

Queenstown

The 1680 town act created a town in Lancaster County "on the side of Coretomond River against the place where the ships ride on a point of land belonging to Mr. Edward Carter about a quarter of a mile up the creeke."[89] Despite these complicated instructions, no town was built at this site, for the law was repealed before any action was taken.[90]

In 1691, a second attempt to create a town at this site was made. The General Assembly now referred to the land "where Mrs. Hannah Ball now liveth scituate on the Westerne side of the mouth of Corotoman River."[91] Fifty acres of this land were acquired in 1692 by Captain David Fox and Robert Carter, acting as trustees for Lancaster County, at a cost of 13,000 pounds of tobacco.[92] A small amount of building occurred at the site, but the act was repealed before any significant progress could be made.

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[89] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473.

[90] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 89.

[91] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:60.

[92] James Warton, "The Lost Settlement of Queenstown," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 10 (1960): 876.

The site was again created a town in the 1705 town act, and this time, was given the name Queenstown,[93] in honor of Queen Anne. At least twenty-four men purchased land in the town following passage of this act.[94] Queenstown seems to have prospered, for the county chose to build its courthouse in the town.[95]

At some point, probably in the 1740's,[96] Queenstown started to decline. By 1771, the county had moved the courthouse elsewhere.[97] The most likely reason for the town's abandonment (complete by the beginning of the nineteenth century) was the increasing loss of land to the river. "The river encroached on the banks, washing out mud into the harbor and filling it up, so that. . . the creek (upon which Madam Hannah Ball used to live) was not navigable."[98] A natural phenomenon ended the settlement at Queenstown.

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[93] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:416.

[94] Wharton, "Lost Settlement," p. 877.

[95] Ibid., p. 876.

[96] Ibid., p. 878.

[97] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 89.

[98] Wharton, "Lost Settlement," p. 879.

Lower Norfolk County

Norfolk

Of the twenty-seven towns created by the General Assembly in 1680, 1691 and 1705, Norfolk was the most successful. By 1736, it was large enough to be created a borough by Royal Charter. Only Williamsburg and Jamestown shared this distinction. Although the town was totally destroyed by American and British forces in 1776, by the close of the eighteenth century, Norfolk had again achieved its pre-war status.

The double pointed peninsula on the north side of the Elizabeth River that was to become Norfolk was first owned by Lord Maltravers.[99] The order from Charles I requesting Governor John Harvey to present Maltravers with a tract was dated July 5, 1636.[100] Maltravers was from the family that had formerly held the title of Duke of Norfolk. In honor of his family, he named his land "Norfolk."[101] How long Maltravers retained ownership of the land is not known, but by mid-century, six settlers

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[99] George Holbert Tucker, Norfolk Highlights, 1584-1881 (Norfolk, Virginia: The Norfolk Historical Society, 1972), p. 8.

[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid.

and one mercantile group held title to the future site of the town.[102] As a defense against the Dutch, a fort was built on this site in 1673.[103]

In 1680, the land chosen for Lower Norfolk County was owned by Nicholas Wise.[104] The trustees, Anthony Lawson and William Robinson, purchased fifty acres for the town from his son and heir in 1683, even though the legislative act had been repealed. John Ferebee made the original survey and the first lots were sold in the fall of 1683. But, by 1691, only ten lots had been sold, and the ownership of three of these lots had been forfeited to the county for failure to build proper structures on the lots.[105] (See Map 6.)

When Norfolk was again named an official port in 1691, prosperity came to the town. In that year alone, twenty-nine lots were sold.[106] Norfolk's first church was built in 1698,[107] and by 1699, at least one public wharf

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[102] Ibid., p. 9.

[103] Ibid., p. 11.

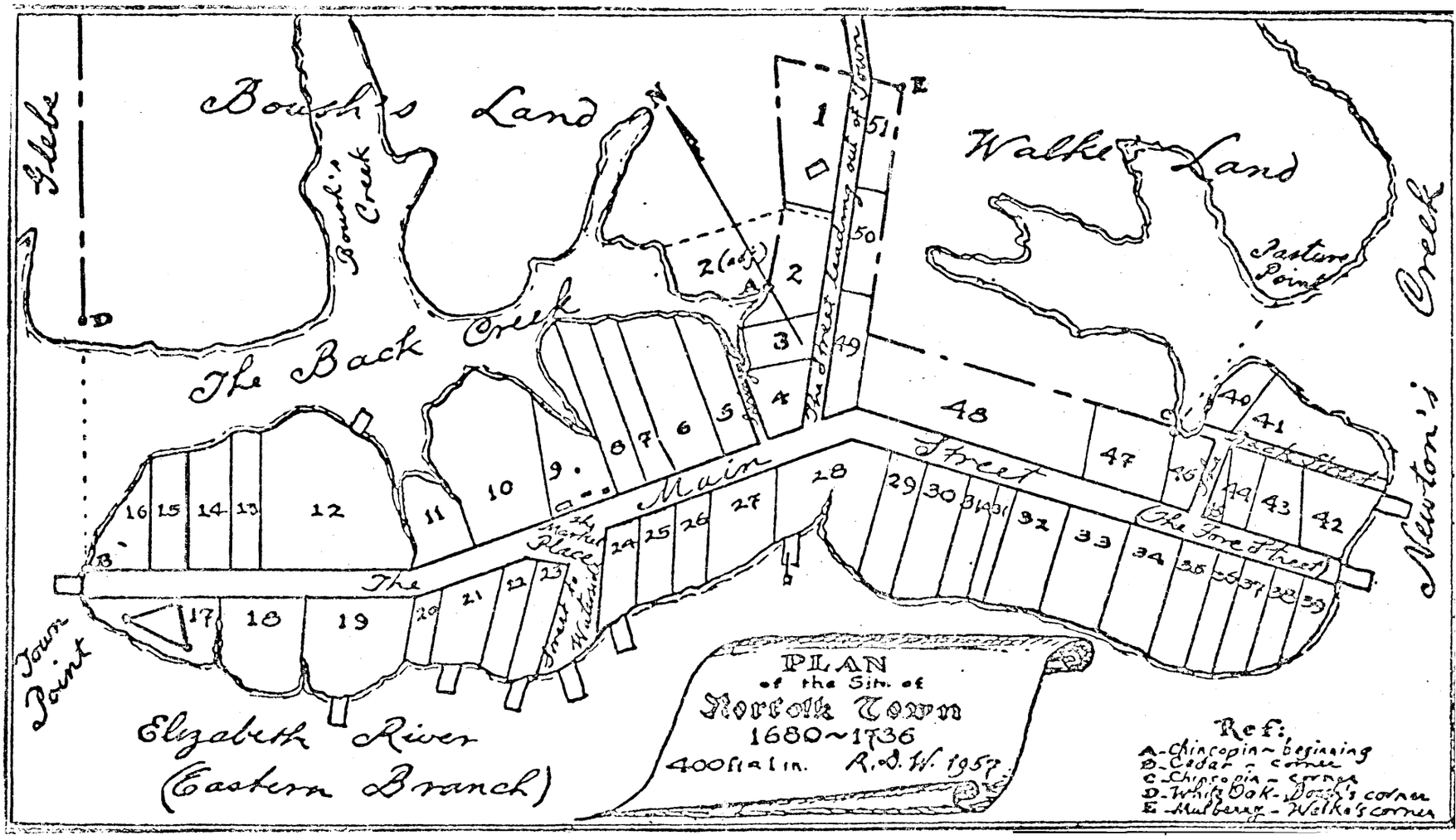
[104] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:472.

[105] Reps, Tidewater Towns, pp. 71-75.

[106] Ibid.

[107] Ibid., p. 74.

MAP 6.



Plan of Norfolk, 1680-1736. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 74.)

had been erected.[108] In 1705, when once again Norfolk received official recognition as a port of entry, only ten of the original lots surveyed by Ferebee remained unsold.[109]

In 1728, William Byrd of Westover described Norfolk as having all the "advantages of a situation requisite for trade and navigation." At least twenty ships were harbored at the docks, and they were able to "sail in and out in a few hours." Some of the ships were from the West Indies and were loading beef, pork, flour and lumber. There were also a number of ships unloading goods from North Carolina. Byrd remarked that, unlike most towns in Virginia, Norfolk did not have many inns and ordinaries. The townspeople were "merchants, ships carpenters, and other useful artisans, with sailors enough to manage their navigation." Although he found the air and water to be unhealthy, he noted Norfolk did have "the two cardinal virtues that make a place thrive, industry and frugality."[110]

By 1728, Norfolk had increased so in size that it was necessary to extend the town limits. The additional

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[108] Bruce, Economic History, 2:559.

[109] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 75.

[110] Louis B. Wright, ed., The Prose Works of William Byrd of Westover (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press, 1966), p. 173.

land was acquired from Colonel Samuel Boush.[111] Shortly thereafter, the county felt it should have its own municipal government. On September 15, 1736, the General Assembly incorporated Norfolk as a borough and granted it one burgess member.[112] Governor Gooch appointed Samuel Bouch as the first mayor, and made Sir John Randolph the recorder.[113]

Norfolk continued to expand its services in an unprecedented manner. A police force was created in 1738. However, the force was soon disbanded for the annual cost of forty English pounds proved too expensive.[114] In 1749, a tax upon every household was levied to provide money to repair the streets.[115] The first theatre performance in Norfolk took place on November 17, 1751; a comedy by George Farquhar with Walter Murray and Thomas Kean as leading actors.[116] A prison "thirty-two feet

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[111] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 75. The town was also enlarged in 1757 and 1761.

[112] Hening, Statutes at Large, 4:541.

[113] Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Norfolk, Historic Southern Port (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1931), p. 8.

[114] Ibid., p. 9.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Tucker, Norfolk Highlights, p. 50.

long, sixteen feet wide, and eight feet pitch in the clear, with three rooms and a brick stack of chimneys,"[117] was constructed in 1753. Yet, the first free school was not built until 1762.[118]

The Revolutionary War brought total destruction to Norfolk. Like other towns, its trade was interrupted, and the valuable West Indies trade was lost.[119] Yet, Norfolk lost more than its economic base. Lord Dunmore and his troops, having fled Williamsburg, occupied Norfolk on November 16, 1775. On January 1, 1776, the British attacked the town. "Buildings that remained after intensive shelling by British forces were burned by the retreating American troops."[120] Thirteen hundred buildings were destroyed, and six thousand persons were left homeless.[121] By 1781 only two houses had been rebuilt.[122]

With the end of the war, Norfolk began rebuilding. However, it was not until 1783 that substantial trade was

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[117] Wertenbaker, Norfolk, p. 11.

[118] Ibid., p. 24.

[119] Ibid., p. 40.

[120] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 216.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Wertenbaker, Norfolk, p. 81.

resumed.[123] By 1796, close to five hundred buildings stood in Norfolk,[124] and it was predicted that Norfolk would again become "the chief port of the trade of the Chesapeake.[125]

Middlesex County

Urbanna

In 1680, the General Assembly declared that Middlesex County should build its port of entry on "the west side of Ralph Wormeleys creeke against the plantation where he now lives."[126] The county court, on August 16, 1680, appointed Major Robert Beverley and Lieutenant Colonel John Burnham as trustees for the town and ordered them to purchase the required fifty acres from Wormeley.[127] Wormeley refused to sell the land, and no town could be created at this site under the provisions of the General Assembly act. A warehouse was built, but no lots could

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[123] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 216.

[124] Morrison, ed., Travels, p. 98.

[125] Matthew Carey, Carey's General Atlas (Philadelphia: Carey, 1796; Readex Microprints), p. 97.

[126] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473.

[127] Heite, "Markets and Ports," p. 39.

be sold.[128] All attempts to secure the land ended with the repeal of the act in 1682.

In 1691, the General Assembly again named Wormeley's land as the chosen town site in Middlesex County. The new trustees, Mathew Kemp, Christopher Robinson and William Churchill met the problem of Wormeley's refusal to sell the land by condemning the land and securing ownership for the county.[129] A small number of lots were sold under the 1691 act, but the repeal of the act in 1693 caused the trustees to stop all sales of land.[130]

Once again, in 1705, the General Assembly created a town and port of entry on Wormeley's land, and named it Urbanna, in honor of Queen Anne. This time the town seems to have been developed, for twenty-three lots were sold between 1704 and 1708.[131] "Warehouses were erected on some of the parcels, and Urbanna gradually began to serve its intended function as a port town for the plantations located along the Rappahannock."[132] Urbanna developed

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[128] Ibid.

[129] Bruce, Economic History, 2:558.

[130] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 79.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Ibid.

into a commercial center after the General Assembly enacted legislation in 1712 and 1730 for the storage and inspection of tobacco exclusively at licensed public warehouses.[133] (See Map 7.) Urbanna was also the county seat for Middlesex. In 1764, James Reid donated a lot to the vestry of the parish of Christ's Church to establish and finance a free school.[134]

Urbanna began to decline during the Revolution. The war ruined the overseas trade Urbanna depended upon for financial success. It is probably for this reason that the town was a stronghold for Loyalists.[135] In 1786, a merchant described Urbanna as having "a capital courthouse,"[136] but predicted the town would never be a large center "as there is no back country to supply it."[137] Urbanna, then, achieved a fairly high level of success in the colonial period, but this success was ended when the war interrupted its overseas trade. And

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[133]Heite, "Markets and Ports," p. 39.

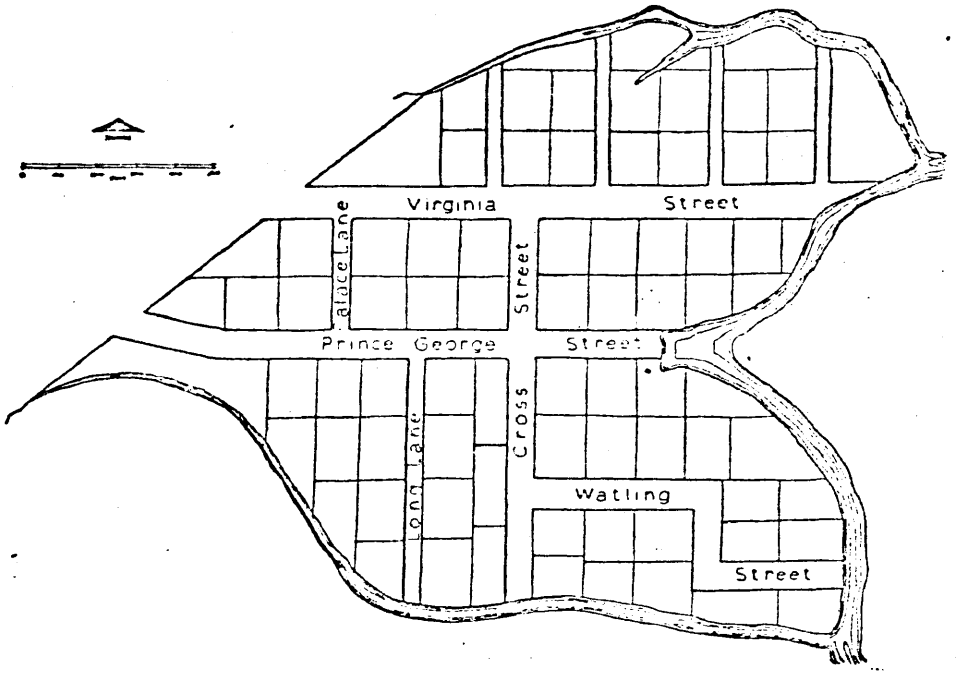
[134]"Education in Colonial Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly (series one) 6 (1897-98): 83.

[135]Mrs. W. Harris Booth, Middlesex Historical Pageant (Urbanna, Virginia: Middlesex County Woman's Club, 1938), p. 5.

[136]Marion Tinling and Louis B. Wright, ed., Quebec to Carolina in 1785-86 (San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1943), p. 227.

[137]Ibid.

MAP 7.



Plan of Urbanna. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 79.)

the lack of a large hinterland hampered its re-establishment as a local trading center. Even today, Urbanna is a small town.

Nansemond County

Nansemond

Little is known about the town created in Nansemond County under the multiple town acts. Nansemond Town must have existed in some form because it was occasionally mentioned in contemporary sources. But all details of the town are now missing.

The 1680 General Assembly authorized a town to be built "att col Dues point als Huffs point."[138] This describes the land purchased by Frances Hough in 1635, when he claimed title to 800 acres "beginning at the first creek of Nansemond River, on the south side, and extending to the mouth of said river."[139] Some construction was most likely begun before repeal of the 1680 act, for the 1691 act refers to the town at Huffs Point "where formerly by law appointed and was accordingly laid out and paid for

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[138] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:472.

[139] "Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 4 (1897): 79.

and built upon pursuant to the said law."[140] In time, this town became known as Nansemond and was officially so named in the 1705 act.[141]

Hugh Jones, writing in 1724, mentions that Nansemond Town existed, but he places it across the river from Jamestown. In actuality, Nansemond was much closer to Norfolk. The Jefferson and Fry map of 1751 shows no trace of the town. (See Map 5.) Although it is certain that Nansemond once existed, it has left few records.[142] Thus, no information exists on the social or economic life of the town.

Nansemond's growth could have been hindered by the presence of Norfolk, as Tindals Point was limited by Yorktown. In the eighteenth century this region of the James probably could not support, in terms of money and people, two large ports. Norfolk, having the better harbor, grew and eclipsed Nansemond.

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[140] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:58.

[141] Ibid., 3:416.

[142] Jones, Present State of Virginia, p. 63, mentions Nansemond Town. The town may have received note in the Nansemond County records, but they are no longer extant.

New Kent County

"at Brick House"

New Kent County was only named in the 1680 act. The General Assembly placed the town "att the Brick house along the high land from marsh to marsh."[143] The site took the name "Brick House" from a structure built upon it around 1660. Although it is not known who built the house, William Bassett became its owner in 1669. In the seventeenth century, the county courthouse and clerk's office were at the Brick House location. Brick House played a role in Bacon's Rebellion when two of the rebels, Lawrence and Drummond, hid in the courthouse.[144]

As a result of the 1680 act, a warehouse was built at Brick House, but it appears the trustees discontinued all activity at the site when the act was repealed.[145] In the eighteenth century, the site was known as the port of the ferry from Delaware,[146] just across the river.

The land was held by the descendants of William

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[143] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473.

[144] Malcolm H. Harris, "The Port Towns of the Pamunkey," William and Mary Quarterly (second series) 23 (1943): 495.

[145] Ibid., p. 496.

[146] For a sketch of Delaware, see below, this chapter.

Bassett throughout the colonial period. The name of the Bassett plantation was "Eltham."[147] John Henry's map of Virginia, prepared in 1770, shows the site of Brick House. (See Map 8.) The New Kent County town, then, seems to have never materialized in the sense that individuals could purchase lots at the site. Ownership of the entire tract remained within one family. Yet, the site did function as a local urban center, for it was a terminal of a ferry.

Northampton County

Northampton

The town created in Northampton County by the multiple town acts may have been surveyed twice, but its existence was of such minor importance that no record of the town or its activities remain.[148] The 1680 act designated "the northside of kings creek beginning at the mouth and soe along the creeke on the land belonging to Mr. Secretaryes office"[149] as the prospective town site. Again, in 1691, the General Assembly hoped the town

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[147] Ibid., p. 496.

[148] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 89.

[149] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473.

MAP 8.

Virginia, 1770. John Henry. (Malcolm H. Harris, "The Port Towns of the Pamunkey," William and Mary Quarterly (second series) 23 (1943): 493-516.

would be placed on "one of the branches of Cherry Stone Creek, on the land of Mrs. Anna Lee."[150] And the 1705 attempt to build a town in Northampton County simply states the site as "kings creek. . . upon the land called the secretarys land"[151] and names the site Northampton.

Yet, no trace, either physical or historical, remains of Northampton.[152] In all probability, the town never existed. For some reason, the site was unpopular and could not attract settlers. Northampton, then, is an example of the total failure of the multiple town acts.

Northumberland County

Chickacony

Chickacony, in Northumberland County, was designated by the Virginia General Assembly as a port of entry in 1680.[153] Colonel John Mottrom, who owned and built Coan Hall in Chickacony, had settled the area in the 1630's.[154] His settlement, known as a haven for

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[150] Ibid., 3:59.

[151] Ibid., 3:415.

[152] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 89.

[153] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473.

[154] H. Ragland Eubank, Historic Northern Neck of Virginia (Richmond, Virginia: Whittet & Shepperson, 1934), p. 72.

Protestants fleeing Baltimore, contained the first wharf and warehouse in the Northern Neck.[155] Chickacony seemed to be an ideal place to create an official port.

Although fifty acres were purchased from Spencer Mottrom, and the town site was surveyed,[156] no records have been discovered that show any building was done on the land. Most likely, the trustees halted all planned construction when the act was repealed. In 1691, Chickacony was again created a town,[157] and again, there are no records to indicate the town developed. After 1691, all attempts to build a town at Chickacony were abandoned.

Northumberland County

New-Castle

In 1705, the Northumberland County site was changed to Wicocomoca and re-named New-Castle.[158] Like Chickacony, there are no records to indicate the town's growth and decline. It would seem this town, too, was never built.

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[155] Ibid.

[156] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:60.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:417.

For example, it does not appear on the Jefferson-Fry map of 1751. (See Map 5.)

Both Chickacony and New-Castle failed to emerge as towns. Perhaps Northumberland County, in the northern part of the colony, was too sparsely settled in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to permit the growth of towns. For example, in 1714, the County had 1272 tithables, compared to 2804 tithables in Gloucester County to the south.[159]

Rappahannock County

Tappahannock

Rappahannock County's legislated port of entry had three names in the colonial period: Hobbs Hole (a corruption of Hobb's Hold, meaning land leased to Hobb[160]), New Plymouth and Tappahannock. The town built at this site became a county seat and a moderately successful trading town.

The site on the south side of the Rappahannock River was first created a port in 1680. That same year,

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[159]Evarts B. Greene, and Virginia D. Harrington, American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 149.

[160]Hanson, Virginia Place Names, p. 75.

it was chosen as the county seat of Rappahannock County (later Essex County). The trustees, John Stone, William Lloyd, Henry Awbrey and Thomas Gouldman, purchased the land, and George Morris surveyed it in October, 1680.[161] (See Map 9.) They then named the town "New Plymouth" and sold several lots.[162] Captain William Fowle, a seaman, bought the first lot,[163] and Colonel Edward Hill of Charles City County bought the second. The others were purchased by local planters or merchants.[164] Even after the 1680 act was repealed, the town continued to grow, for when it was again cited in the 1691 act, the General Assembly noted that the "Court house, severall dwelling houses, and ware houses"[165] were on the site.

In the 1705 act, the General Assembly changed the town's name to Tappahannock.[166] Harry Beverly was ordered to prepare a second survey of the town.[167] (See Map 10.)

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[161] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 67.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Heite, "Markets and Ports," p. 37.

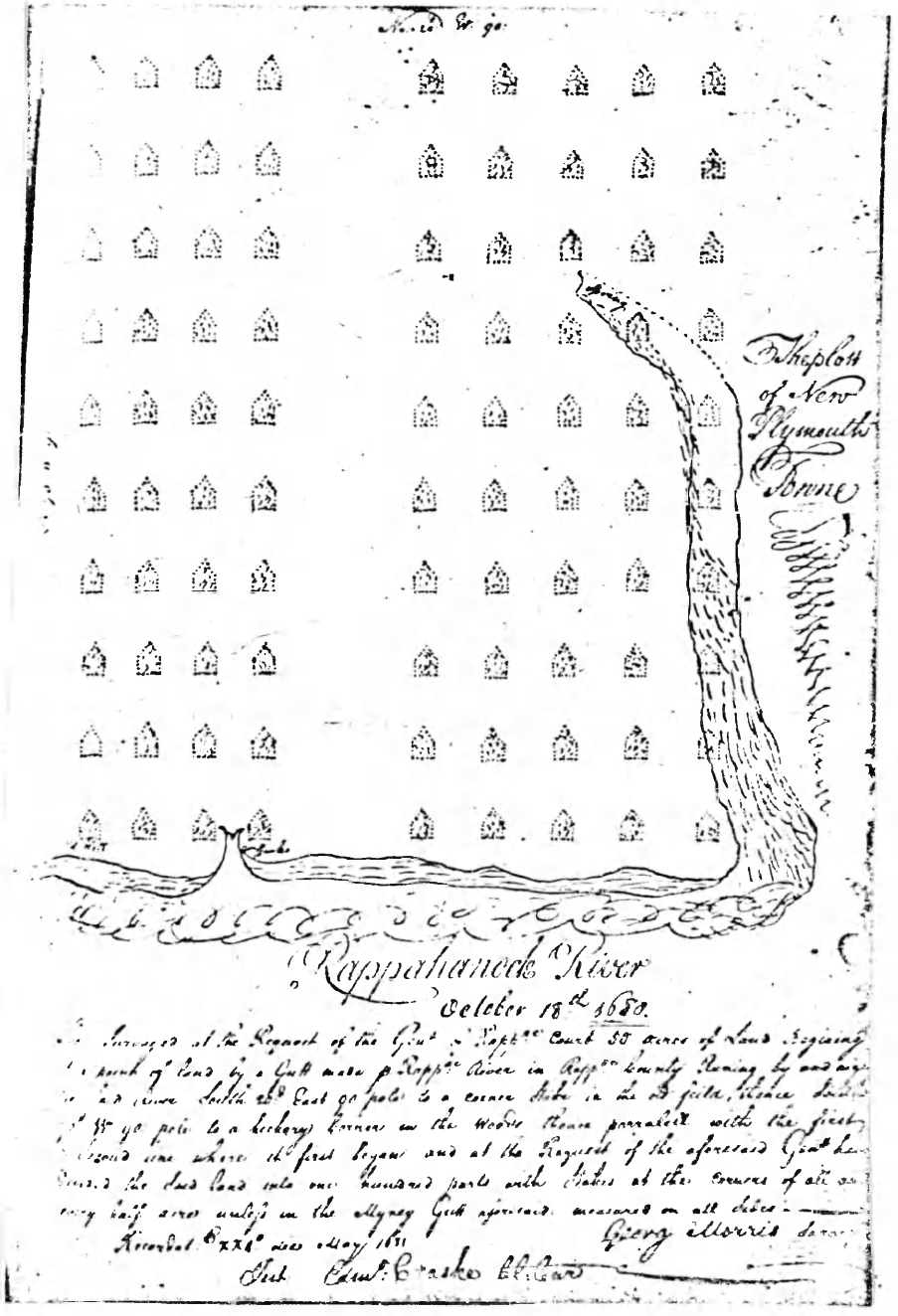
[164] Ibid.

[165] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:59.

[166] Ibid., 3:417.

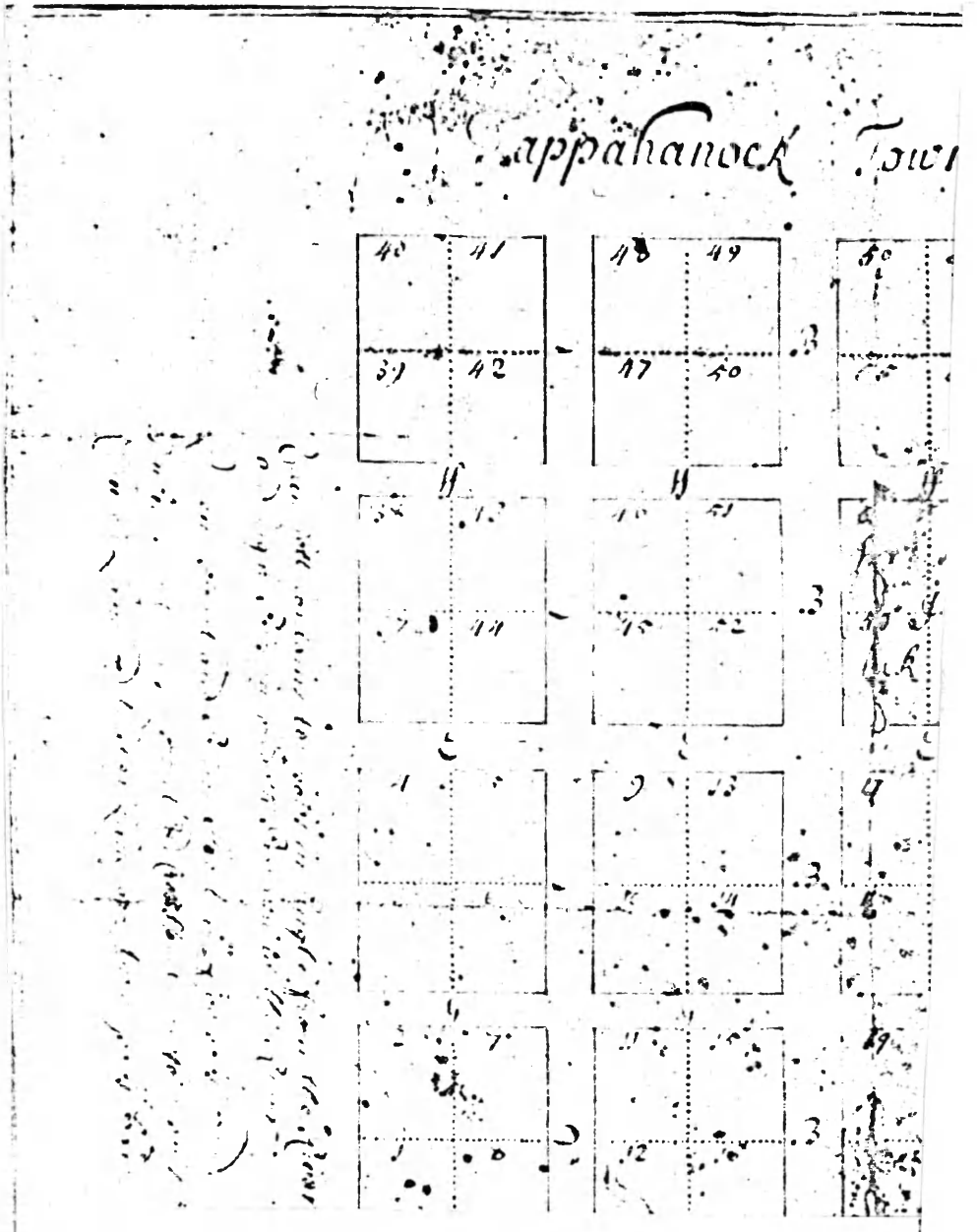
[167] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 67.

MAP 9.



Plan of Tappahannock, 1680. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 68.)

MAP 10.



Plan of Tappahannock, 1706. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 69.)

Tappahannock was a commercial, political and social center in the eighteenth century.[168] Landon Carter purchased most of his supplies in the town, including candles, turpentine, and molasses.[169] Tappahannock was also the site of a ferry.[170]

Tappahannock's economic activities, like most Virginia towns, was severely interrupted by the Revolutionary War. A visitory in 1796 noted that the place had once been quite prosperous, but the war had ruined its trade.[171] The town then contained one hundred houses.[172] But with the close of the war, Tappahannock began rebuilding its trade. In the nineteenth century, with railroad construction by-passing the town, Tappahannock declined to the small town it is today.[173]

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[168] Writers Program, Virginia, p. 452.

[169] Jack P. Greene, ed., The Diary of Colonel Landon Carter of Sabine Hall, 1752-1778, 2 vols. (Charlottesville, Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 1965), 1:243, 551, 600.

[170] Rouse, Traveling the Roads, p. 7.

[171] Morrison, Travels, p. 95.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Writers Program, Virginia, p. 452.

Stafford County

Peace Point

The 1680 act called for a town to be built "in Stafford County att Pease Point att the mouth of Aquia on the northside."[174] This Peace Point site had originally been known as the Indian town Patowmack, which once had a population of over 650.[175] But, by 1654,[176] Patowmack was such a small village that Giles Brent, a Catholic refugee, was able to settle the area and renamed it Peace Point.[177] Although a town was to be built at this site, there is no indication that it ever existed.[178]

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[174] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473.

[175] Oscar H. Darter, "Where the West Began--Historical Sketch of Old Marlborough Town, Stafford County, Virginia," Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine 9 (1959): 801.

[176] John Mercer, "Mercer Land Book," William and Mary Quarterly (first series) 13 (1905): 165.

[177] C. Malcolm Watkins, The Cultural History of Marlborough, Virginia (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1968), p. 7.

[178] Ibid.

Stafford County

Marlborough

In 1691, the General Assembly created a town and port in Stafford "on the land where Capt. Mallachy Peale now liveth called Potowmack neck."[179] Peale's home, although three miles below Peace Point, was on land that belonged to Giles Brent's heir, Giles Brent II.[180] (See Map 11.) The trustees of Stafford County, John Withers and Matthew Thompson, in accordance with the regulations set forth by the General Assembly, purchased fifty acres from Francis Hammersley, the guardian of Brent, at the price of 13,000 pounds of tobacco. For two additional acres to be used for a courthouse, Hammersley received 8,000 pounds more.[181] On August 16, 1691, after all titles to the land had been secured, William Buckner prepared a survey of the town.[182] (See Map 12.)

The town began on a small scale for only twenty-seven lots were sold to fifteen buyers by February 11, 1692. Yet, by the next year, the town was large enough

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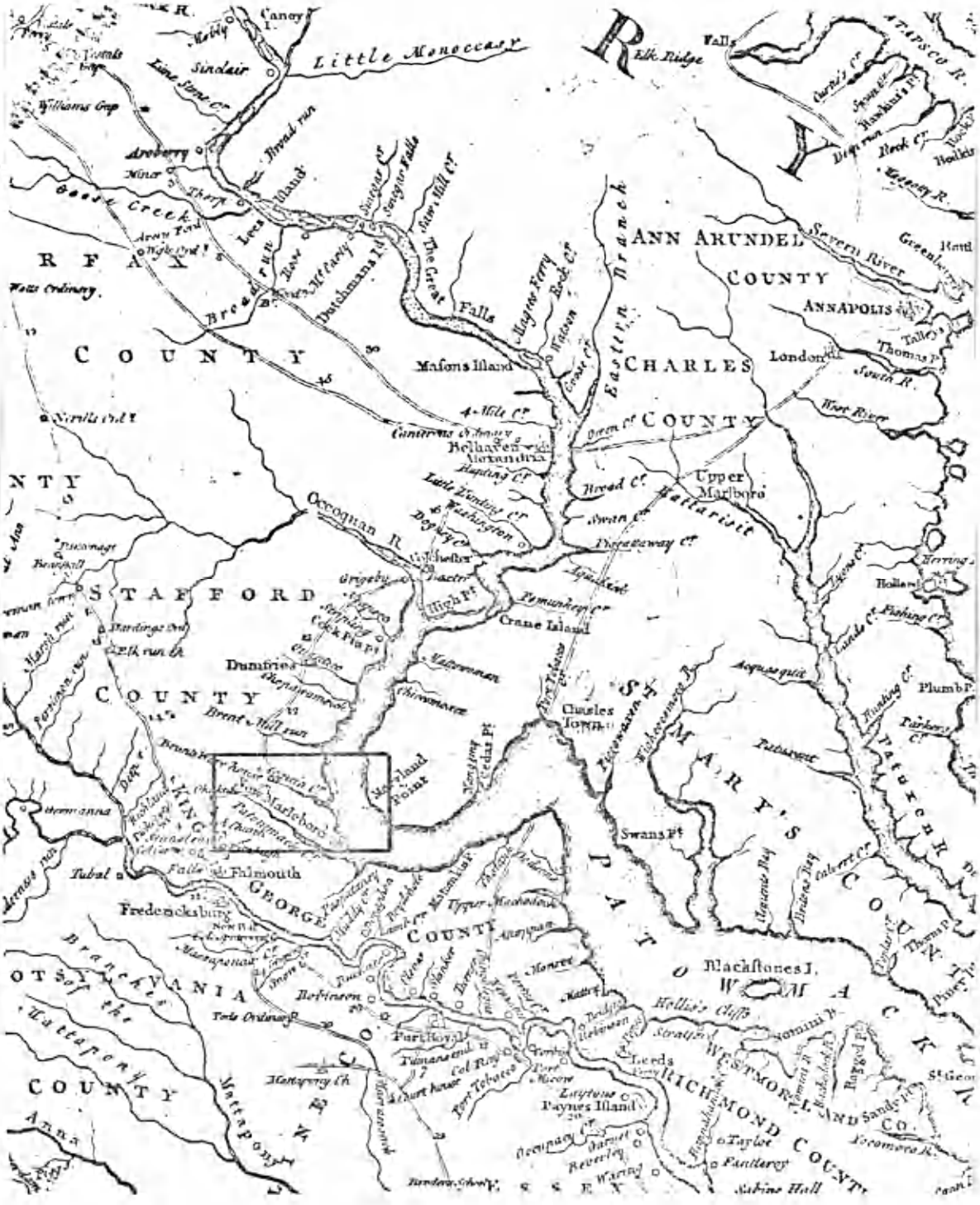
[179] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:59.

[180] Watkins, Cultural History of Marlborough, p. 7.

[181] Ibid., p. 8. Malachi Peale was to receive 3,450 pounds for his home from Hammersley.

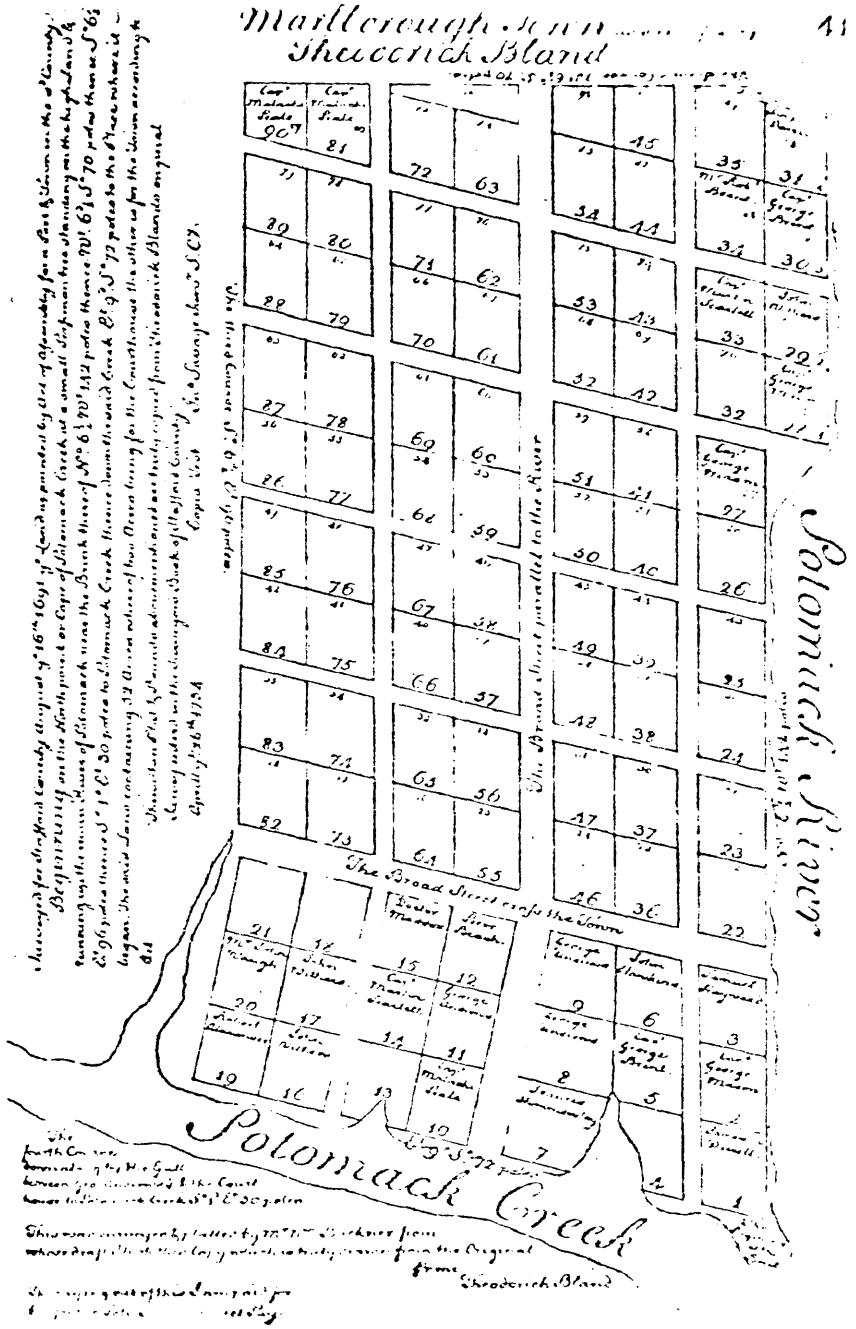
[182] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 77.

MAP 11.



The area of Marlborough, 1751. Peter Jefferson and Joshua Fry. (C. Malcolm Watkins, The Cultural History of Marlborough, Virginia (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1960), p. 19.

MAP 12.



Marlborough Town as surveyed by William Buckner. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 77.)

to have two licensed ordinaries.[183] But in that year, too, all further progress was halted by the repeal of the 1691 town act.[184]

The site was again created a town by the 1705 act and named Marlborough.[185] Despite the repeal of the act, this town survived, due primarily to the presence of the county courthouse.[186] However, the life of Marlborough was brief, for in 1718, a fire destroyed the courthouse and a number of homes.[187] After the fire, a new courthouse was "built at another Place, and all or most of the Houses that had been built in Marlborough were either burnt or suffered to go to ruin.[188]

In the 1730's, Marlborough received a new life when John Mercer began buying lots in the nearly deserted town.[189] He soon became involved in a controversy over

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[183] Watkins, Cultural History of Marlborough, p. 8.

[184] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 77.

[185] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:417.

[186] Watkins, Cultural History of Marlborough, p. 14.

[187] Ibid.

[188] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 12 vols. (Richmond, Virginia: 1914), 4:285-286.

[189] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 78.

the titles, as a result of two survey maps.[190] (Compare Map 12 and Map 13.) Finally, the matter was settled ten years later, and Mercer was free to build his plantation-town.[191] To rejuvenate Marlborough, Mercer built a mill, a brewery, a glass factory, a tavern, a racetrack, and several warehouses.[192] When he died in 1768, Marlborough became the property of his son, James. The plantation-town remained in the family until 1779, when it was sold to John Cooke.[193] By the time of Cooke's death in 1819, no buildings remained at the site.[194]

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[190] John Mercer, "Petition of John Mercer," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 5 (1898): 278-282.

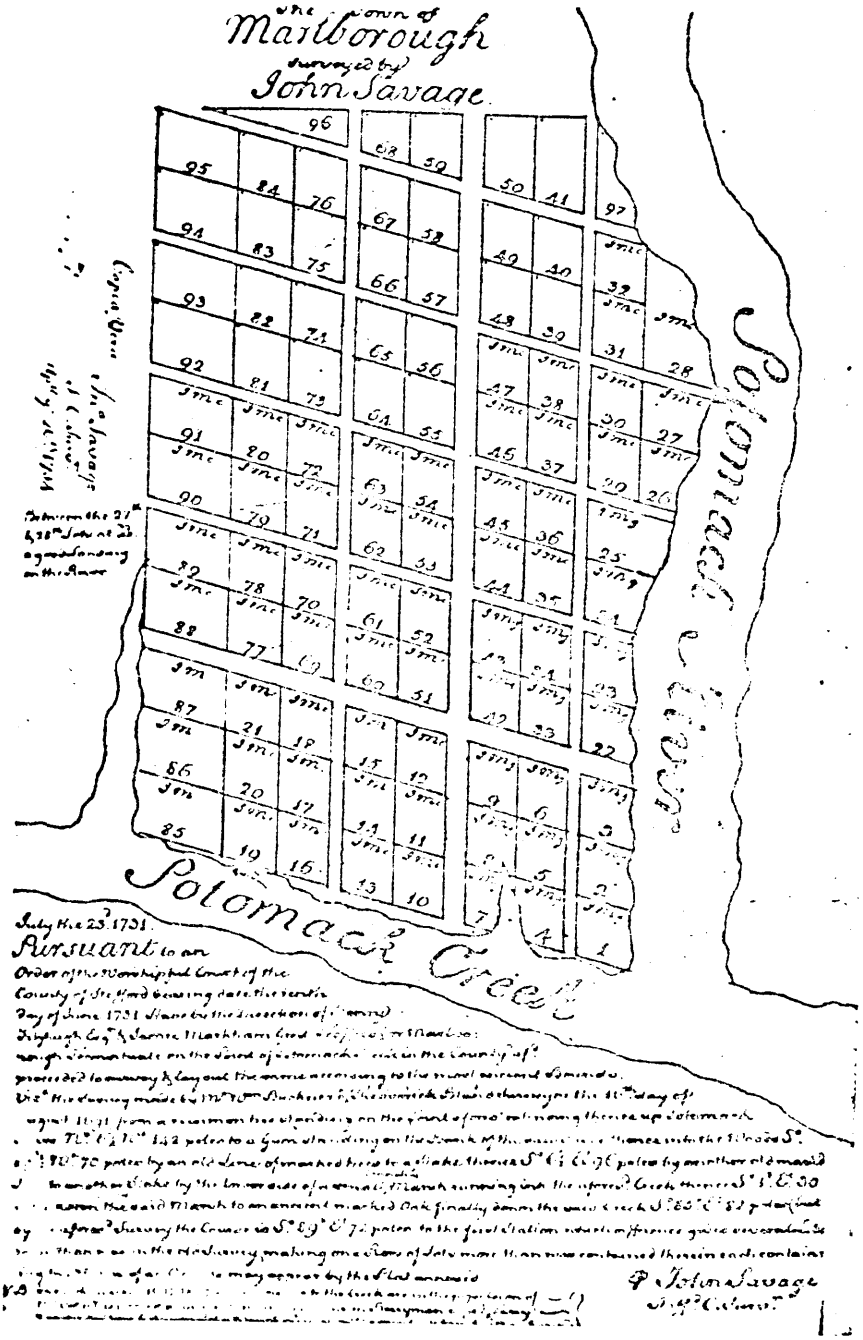
[191] Watkins, Cultural History of Marlborough, p. 45.

[192] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 78.

[193] Watkins, Cultural History of Marlborough, pp. 43-46.

[194] Ibid., p. 64.

MAP 13.



Marlborough Town as Surveyed by John Savage.
(Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 78.)

Surry County

"at Smiths Fort"

A town was to be erected, according to the 1680 town act, in Surry County "att Smiths ffort."[195] Smiths Fort, across the river from Jamestown, was the second settlement built in Virginia by the English.[196] Yet, there is no indication that a town was ever built at this site in 1680.[197]

Surry County

"at Grays Creek"

In 1691, another town was created for Surry County "at the mouth of Grays Creeke,"[198] two miles from Smiths Fort.[199] The next year, the trustees for the town purchased the land from Henry Hartwell.[200] When the 1691 act was repealed, questions over the validity of the town

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[195] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:472.

[196] State Historical Markers of Virginia, 4th ed. (Richmond, Virginia: Conservation Commission, 1937), p. 84.

[197] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 89.

[198] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:60.

[199] W. A. Bohannon, "The Old Town of Cobham," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 57 (1949): 253.

[200] Ibid., p. 254.

property owners' title to lots arose. This matter was not settled until 1772, when the General Assembly incorporated the town and named it Cobham.[201] (See Map 14.) But the continuity between the Grays Creek settlement of 1691 and Cobham of 1772 has not been positively established.[202]

Cobham met with limited success. A ferry across the James River was begun in the eighteenth century,[203] and this became the source of livelihood for the town. Yet a traveler in 1777 described the town as a "paltry, shabby Village, consisting of about a dozen Houses."[204]

In the early nineteenth century, the ferry failed and Cobham declined. The town had depended on the ferry for its success. When the town failed to adapt to its new situation, it ceased to exist. By 1836, the town was described as "nearly entirely deserted."[205]

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[201] Hening, Statutes at Large, 8:647.

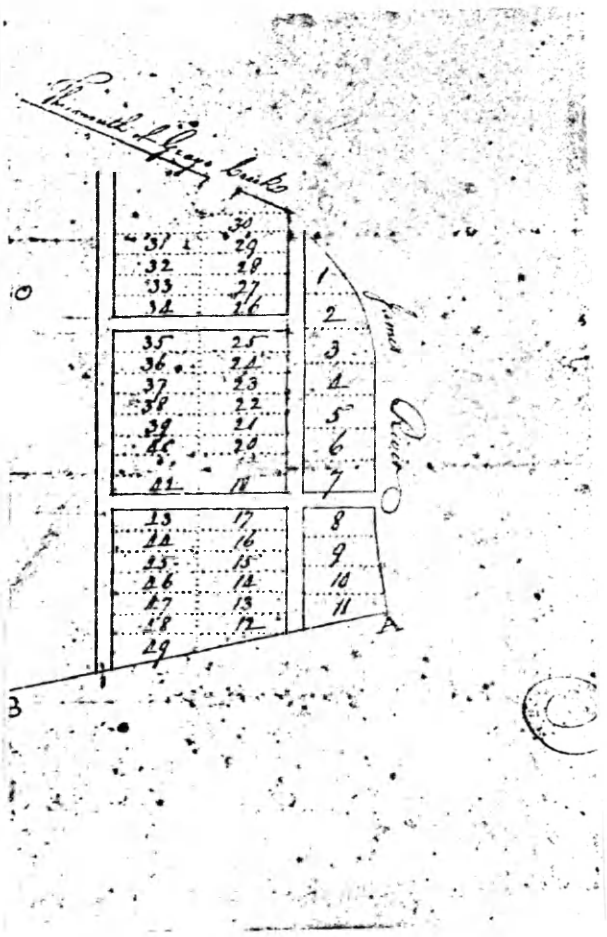
[202] Bohannon, "The Old Town of Cobham," p. 254.

[203] Virginia Gazette, PD, February 17, 1774, p. 3., col. 1.

[204] Fred Shelley, ed., "The Journal of Ebenezer Hazard in Virginia, 1777," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 62 (1954): 411.

[205] Joseph Martin, Gazetteer of Virginia (Charlottesville, Virginia: Moseley & Tompkins, Printers, 1835), p. 265.

MAP 14.



Plat of Cobham. (W. A. Bohannan, "The Old Town of Cobham," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 57 (1949): 252-268.)

Upper York County

Delaware

The site chosen by the General Assembly in 1691 to serve as a town and port for the "upper parts of Yorke River,"[206] originally known as "Pamunkey," had been the chief village of the Pamunkey Indians of the Powhatan Confederacy.[207] In the seventeenth century, the land was deeded to Thomas West, the third Lord de la Warre.[208] His land was known as "Delaware," "West's Point," or simply the "Point."[209]

In 1691, fifty acres were purchased from John West for a town.[210] Since there are no records of any lots having been purchased, it is doubtful that any building was begun.[211] In 1705, the General Assembly legislated that the land at West Point was to be developed into a

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[206] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:59.

[207] Writers Program, Virginia, p. 465.

[208] Malcolm J. Harris, "'Delaware Town' and 'West Point' in King William County, Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly (second series) 14 (1934): 342.

[209] Hanson, Virginia Place Names, p. 119.

[210] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 79.

[211] Ibid.

town called Delaware.[212] Harry Beverley surveyed the tract in 1706[213] (see Map 15), and by June, 1707, the trustees, John Waller, Thomas Carr and Philip Whitehead, had sold all thirty-two lots.[214]

Since at least three ferries operated in the town (from Delaware to Brick House, Gutteryes and Grave's),[215] it is probable that the site became a small trading place.[216] Yet, the town did not prosper. A possible explanation for this lack of growth may be Delaware's isolated position on a peninsula formed by the Pamunkey, Mattaponi and York rivers.[217] By the close of the eighteenth century, the site had reverted to plantation lands.[218]

Today, West Point occupies the site of the original Delaware. West Point developed after 1861 when the rail-

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[212] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:416.

[213] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 79.

[214] Ibid.

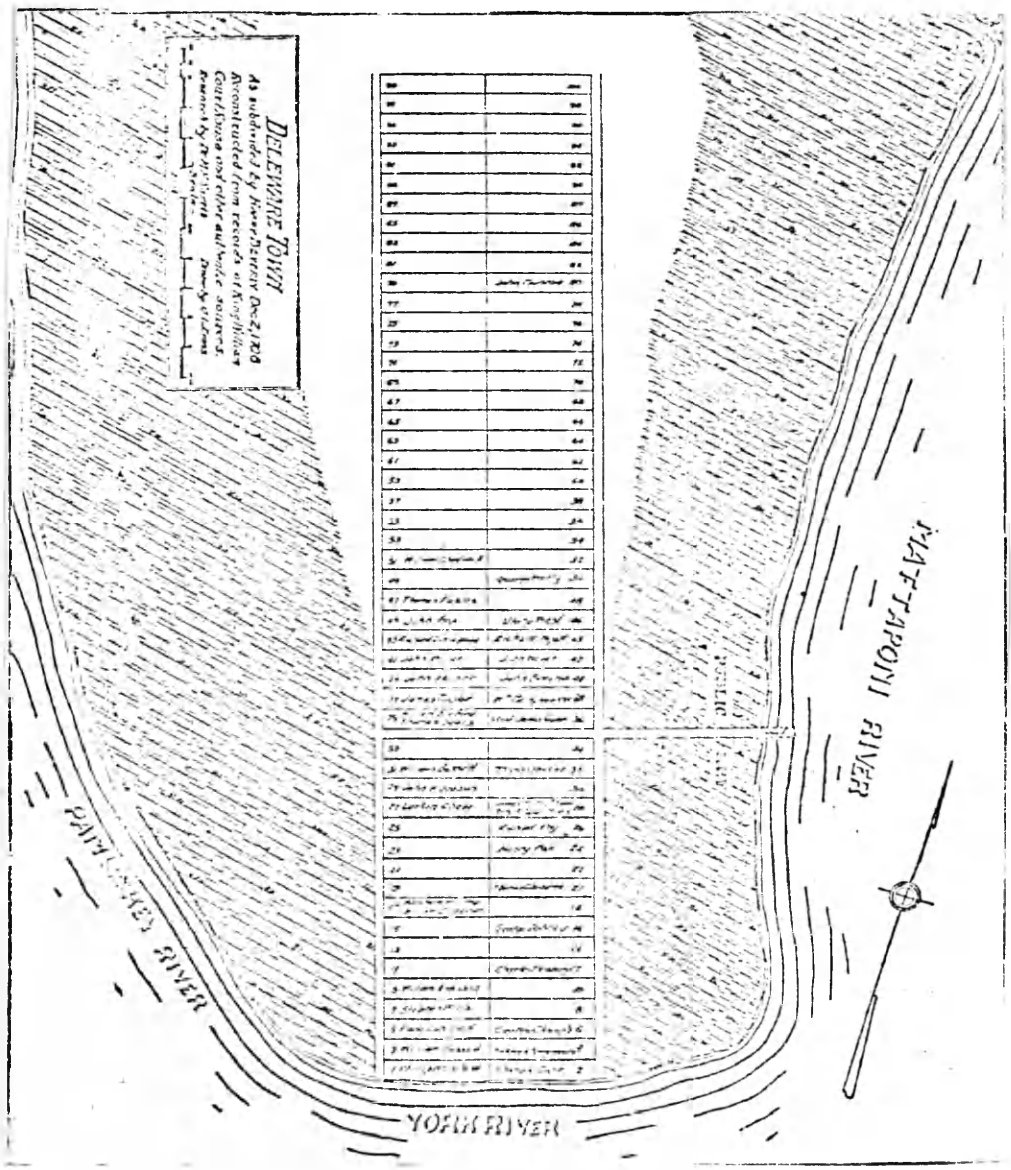
[215] Rouse, Traveling the Roads, p. 7.

[216] Harris, "'Delaware Town,'" p. 345.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 81

MAP 15.



Plan of Delaware, 1706. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 81.)

road between Richmond and the peninsula was completed.[219]

Warwick County

Warwick

Warwick Town was first created to serve Warwick County as an official port of entry in 1680.[220] The town was situated "att the mouth of Deep creek on Mr. Matthews land"[221] on the James River. It was also named the county seat. By 1691, when Warwick received its second designation as an official town, several homes and a "brick Court house and prison"[222] were on the site. Warwick had continued to develop despite the repeal of both acts.

Although Warwick had a promising beginning, it was never more than a village in the colonial period.[223] A few people did have homes in the town, but Warwick was

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[219]Writers Program, Virginia, p. 464. The first time the modern West Point was listed in a local reference gazette was 1877-78, the Virginia Business Directory and Gazetteer. See Ray O. Hummel, Jr., A List of Place Names Included in Nineteenth-Century Directories (Richmond: State Library, 1960), p. 133.

[220]Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:472.

[221]Ibid.

[222]Ibid., 3:60.

[223]Warwick, The City and Its Government (Warwick, Virginia: The City of Warwick, 1956), p. 2.

mainly a center for the county.[224] Principally, the town held the courthouse and prison, lawyers' offices, and an auction market.[225]

In 1740, Richard Randolph had designs of making Warwick into a town "after the Model of Philadelphia."[226] Randolph had purchased land adjacent to the county seat and had surveyed lots. He hoped to sell the lots for ten pistoles each.[227] Some of these lots may have been purchased, but a second Philadelphia did not rise.

The reason Warwick Town did not grow seems to have been its isolated position. It was not near the main highway, Stony Run.[228] In 1807, the county abandoned Warwick and moved the county seat one mile, to the present location of Denbigh.[229]

Even though it was not near major roads, colonial Warwick Town did achieve a moderate amount of success.

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[224] Ibid.

[225] See Virginia Gazette, PD, March 12, 1767, p. 1., col. 3; PD November 19, 1767, p. 2, col. 3; H July 19, 1754, p. 3, col. 2; as examples of the types of activities in Warwick.

[226] Virginia Gazette, January 18, 1740, p. 3, col. 2.

[227] Ibid.

[228] Warwick, p. 4.

[229] Ibid.

It was the county seat and those who chose to live there reflected that status. But it was never a commercial center.

Westmoreland County

"at Nomenie"

The General Assembly twice projected a town in Westmoreland County "att Nomenie on the land of Mr. Hardricke."[230] This site, the extreme eastern point of Currioman Neck, was once an Indian village.[231] The town failed because of the isolation of its site in the seventeenth century.

Westmoreland County

Kinsale

After two unsuccessful attempts to locate Westmoreland's town at Nomenie, the 1705 General Assembly ordered it placed on the Yeocomico River.[232] The site chosen, a low bluff at the head of the Yeocomico River, was held by

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[230] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:473, 3:60.

[231] Eubank, Northern Neck, p. 47.

[232] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:417.

Richard Tidwell.[233] Although Tidwell did not officially sell his land, the county assumed ownership of the tract and began to develop a town.[234] It was named Kinsale, after a town in Ireland.[235]

Kinsale became a shipping and production center for Westmoreland County. Although Kinsale did not have a public wharf, considerable business was conducted on private landings[236] and the town was the colonial center of direct trade with Glasgow and the West Indies.[237] Early in the eighteenth century, the two streams which flow into the Yeocomico were dammed, providing power for mills.[238]

Because the county had never obtained a deed from Tidwell, or his heirs, Kinsale's legal status was in doubt through most of the eighteenth century. Therefore, in 1784, the General Assembly ordered the county to purchase a fifteen acre tract of land belonging to Catesby Jones adjacent to Kinsale.[239] This "second" Kinsale

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[233] Eubank, Northern Neck, p. 66.

[234] Heite, "Markets and Ports," p. 40.

[235] Hanson, Virginia Place Names, p. 210.

[236] Eubank, Historic Northern Neck, p. 66.

[237] Ibid.

[238] Heite, "Markets and Ports," p. 40.

[239] Ibid.

incorporated the "old" Kinsale.[240] The town continued to be a prosperous trading center through the nineteenth century, but declined after small steamboats were replaced by larger, more powerful ships which could not navigate the Yeocomico.[241]

York County

Yorktown

Although the 1680 act ordered York County to build a town "on Mr. Reeds land,"[242] the legislation was ignored.[243] The trustees made no attempt to secure the land. Thus, it was not until 1691, when Read's land was again cited by the General Assembly, that York County began to build its official port of entry.[244]

On July 29, 1691, the trustees, Joseph Ring and Thomas Ballard, purchased fifty acres from Benjamin Read

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[240] Ibid.

[241] Ibid.

[242] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:472.

[243] Clyde F. Trudell, Colonial Yorktown (Old Greenwich, Connecticut: The Chatham Press, Inc., 1971), p. 44.

[244] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:59.

for a town to be known as York.[245] Lawrence Smith prepared the survey.[246] (See Map 16.) For some reason, Smith did not include the waterfront in his plat. Rather, he placed the fifty acres on high ground, denying the town direct access to the shore. Furthermore, he designated the five beach acres "the commons."[247] These errors were to prove costly.

To insure the growth of the town, the General Assembly ordered that a county seat also be built at Yorktown and threatened a fine of fifty pounds sterling on each justice of York County for failure to do so.[248] Henry Cary of Warwick County was chosen master builder, and received 18,000 pounds of tobacco for his work.[249] The first court session was held November 24, 1697.[250]

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[245] York County Records, quoted in Lyon G. Tyler, "History of York County in the Seventeenth Century," Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine 1 (1920): 256-257.

[246] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 81.

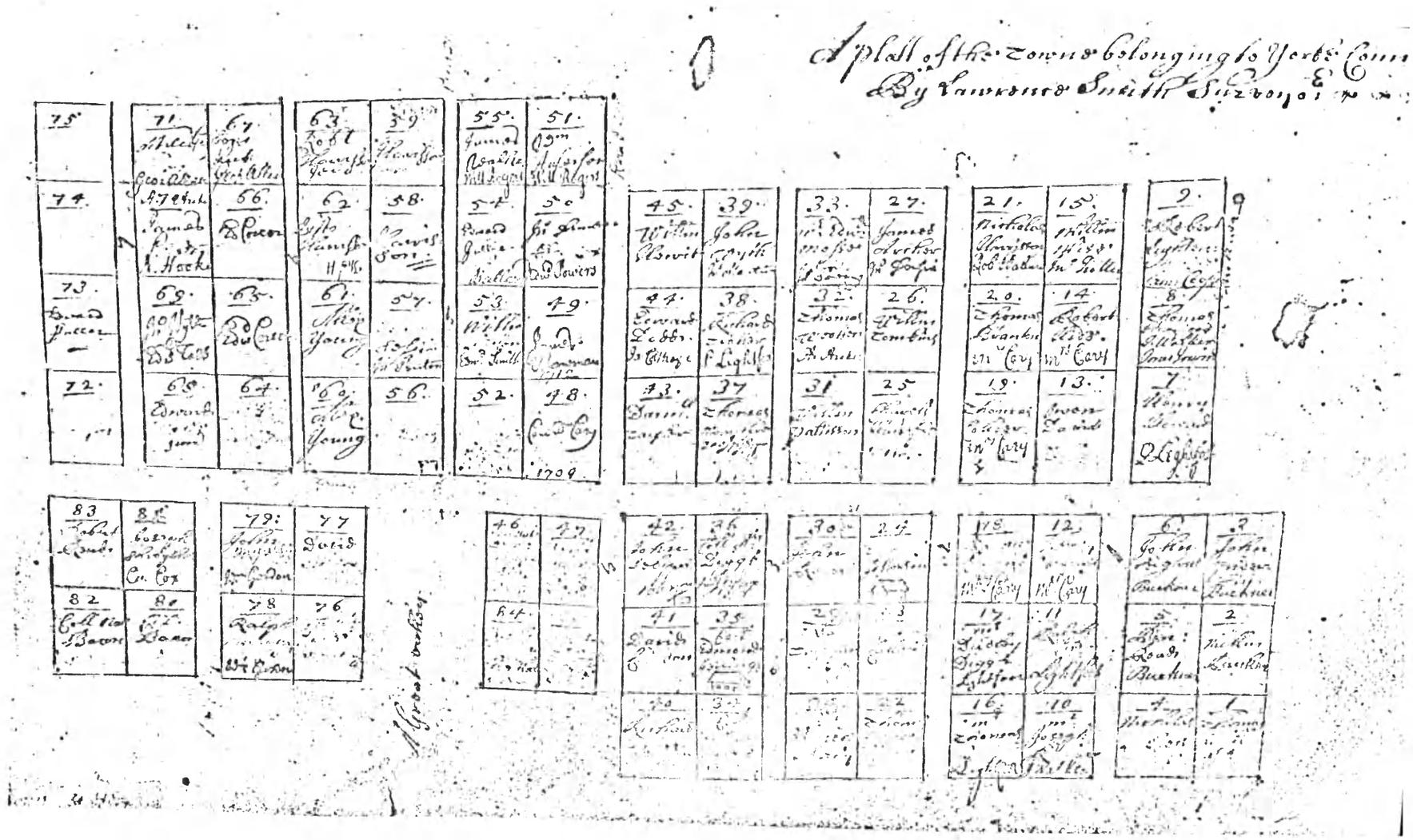
[247] Edward M. Riley, "Suburban Development of Yorktown, Virginia, During the Colonial Period," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 60 (1952): 527.

[248] Hening, Statutes at Large, 3:146-147.

[249] Edward M. Riley, "The Colonial Courthouse of York County, Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly (second series) 22 (1942): 401.

[250] Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 84.

MAP 16.



Plan of Yorktown, 1691. (Reps, Tidewater Towns, p. 83.)

Sir Francis Nicholson took an active interest in the building of Yorktown. He donated five pounds sterling towards the completion of the courthouse, and in 1696, he offered twenty pounds sterling if a brick church were built within two years. After accepting the money, the townspeople built a church of marl.[251]

By 1705, when the General Assembly town act named Yorktown for a third time, all but two of the original lots had been sold. Most of the buyers were mechanics, including a tailor, a smith, and a carpenter.[252] Yorktown had become a trade center.

In 1735, Gwyn Read, Benjamin Read's heir, noting the rapid growth of Yorktown, decided to develop part of the five acres the surveyor Smith had omitted in the original plat. Gwyn divided the land into half-acre lots and offered them for sale.[253] (See Map 17.) This new sale of land brought more tradesmen and mechanics to Yorktown. Among the buyers were carpenters, wheelwrights, butchers, barbers, tailors, and bricklayers.[254] But it was not until 1757 that the General Assembly authorized

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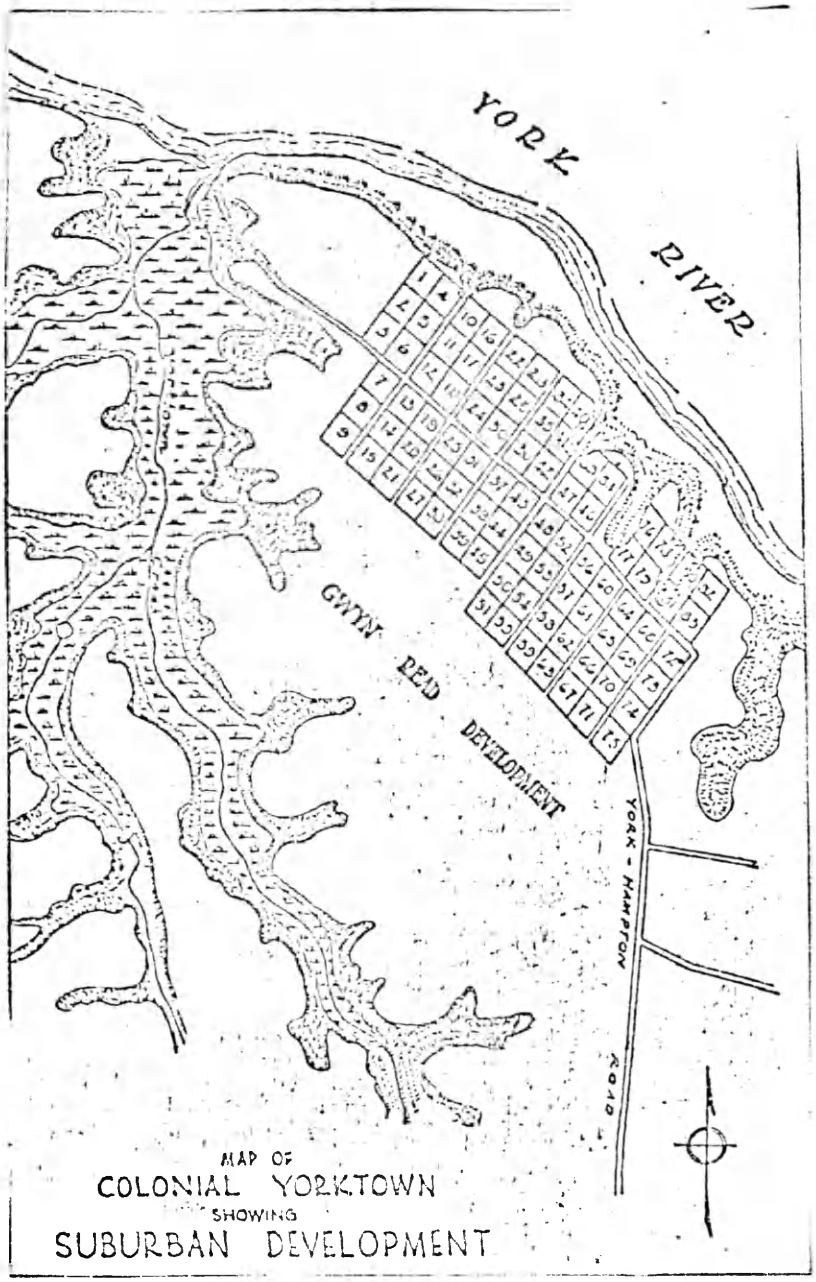
[251] Ibid.

[252] Bruce, Economic History, 2:558.

[253] Riley, "Suburban Development," p. 523.

[254] Ibid., p. 525.

MAP 17.



Map of Colonial Yorktown showing suburban development. (Edward M. Riley, "Suburban Development of Yorktown, Virginia, During the Colonial Period," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 60 (1952): 524.)

the incorporation of this land to Yorktown.[255] Gwyn Read also laid claim to the shoreline property that held the wharves.[256] By order of the Burgesses, the inhabitants of Yorktown purchased this land from Read in 1739, at a cost of 100 pounds of tobacco.[257]

An Englishman visiting in 1736 described Yorktown as having "a great Air of Opulence."[258] The best houses were of brick, the average ones were wood, and the poorest were of plaster.[259] He found that there were many taverns, full of "unbounded licentiousness."[260] Most of the taverns were built on the waterfront, on the land purchased from Read in 1739, and therefore did not attract the "better sorts."[261]

Yorktown experienced a notable trading boom in the first part of the eighteenth century. The average annual wealth of the tobacco export trade was 32,000 pounds.[262]

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[255] Hening, Statutes at Large, 7:139.

[256] Riley, "Suburban Development," p. 527.

[257] Ibid., p. 528.

[258] Americus, "Observations," p. 222.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Riley, "Suburban Development," p. 529.

[262] Trudell, Colonial Yorktown, p. 47.

But as the century progressed, the town suffered from the great tobacco depression. As the local farms and plantations sank into debt, Yorktown's trade business declined. It has been suggested that the Battle of Yorktown in 1781 only finished, not started, the economic decline of the town.[263]

By 1796 Yorktown was described as having "about seventy houses, an Episcopalian church, and a gaol."[264] It was noted that "great quantities of tobacco were formerly inspected in Yorktown; very little, however, was now raised in the neighborhood."[265]

These brief historical sketches of the twenty-seven towns created by the Virginia General Assembly, 1680-1705, have been presented with few, if any, comments on the relations of these towns to each other, to the Tidewater geographical region, and to the process of urbanization. While the purpose of these sketches has been to provide basic information that identifies these sites from the time of their legislation as towns through the colonial period, the sketches have tended to portray

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[263] Ibid., p. 54.

[264] Morrison, Travels, p. 97.

[265] Ibid.

these towns as isolated, autonomous units. No interpretation could be more misleading.

As noted in Chapter I, urbanization affects not simply one area, the boundaries of a town or city, but the entire society. It is basically an economic mechanism that unites rural and urban areas. The urban unit cannot exist in an isolated situation, and therefore, it must be discussed in terms of its relation to its geographical and urban surroundings. The next chapter will attempt to relate the characteristics of each legislated town as described in the sketches to these broader contexts. We begin, then, with a discussion of the Virginia geographical region.

CHAPTER IV

FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS

The geographical region is one context in which the twenty-seven legislated towns must appear if they are to be used successfully to explain the nature of urbanization in colonial Virginia. It was noted in Chapter I that the geographical region has a relation to both the types of functions performed in an urban unit and to the role of the urban unit within the society, the latter being identified in Christaller's central place theory. It seems useful at this point for clarity to introduce theoretical terms that describe these two geographical relationships.

Geographical regions that are defined by a physical uniformity of characteristics or a homogeneity of content are called "formal" regions.[1] The formal region is the collective physical characteristics of an area which determine the probable function of the area as,

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[1] G. W. S. Robinson, "The Geographical Region: Form and Function," The Scottish Geographical Magazine 69 (1953): 49.

say, an agricultural region or a mining region. But when the geographical region is defined by an economic coherence or an "interdependence of parts," as in the case of the central place theory, it is called a "functional" region.[2]

The formal region of Tidewater Virginia is characterized by one of the "most practicable natural highways in the world, the Chesapeake Bay with its long estuarial arms of the James, York, Rappahannock and Potomac rivers."[3] These "natural highways" are a great asset in the development of a commercial network, especially if water shipment is the cheapest and fastest method of transportation available, as it was in the colonial era. And the colonists were well aware of the crucial factor the rivers could play in the success of the mercantile adventure of the colony.[4]

But the English colonists were not the first to value the Tidewater rivers. The Indians of the Powhatan

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[2] Ibid., p. 50.

[3] Edward Graham Roberts, "The Roads of Virginia, 1607-1840," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1950, pp. 3-4.

[4] Griffith, History of American Government, p. 29. For contemporary account, see: Francis Makemie, "A Plain and Friendly perswaisive (sic)," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 4 (1897): 263.

Confederacy had built their villages along the rivers and had supplemented the natural water routes with a network of overland paths or trails. The colonists simply "inherited these transportation routes intact and adapted them."[5] The development of Bermuda Hundred is a clear example of this.

Thus, the formal geographical region of Tidewater Virginia was not only naturally conducive to the development of commerce because of its river highways, but it had also been somewhat developed into an interconnecting network of roads and communication patterns by the Powhatan Indians. By contrast, though, the functional region was developed strictly by the colonists.

Chapter I described the colonists as thoroughly committed to urban life as the proper way of life, for towns were interpreted as items most necessary for the enactment of certain functions mandatory for the legal, institutional and commercial welfare of the colonies. In addition, the idea of town units received further emphasis from the mercantile system which stressed the commercial aspect of the colonies. In order to produce the greatest profit from a colony, it was thought that all economic

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[5]Roberts, "Roads of Virginia," p. 5.

aspects must be controlled and channeled through a number of focal points where imperial authorities could regulate trade. It seemed quite natural that these focal points would be towns.[6] Yet, it has also been noted that the incorporation of towns often took place at a stage of growth that would have been considered premature in Europe. If towns were not immediately available to colonists in any context save legal incorporation, what, then, served as "focal points?" The answer was the "store system."

The store system appeared in Virginia in the latter half of the seventeenth century and quickly shaped the functional region of the colony. It not only gave the colony some economic coherence, but it also related the colony, in economic terms, to Europe.[7] It began this way:

The colonial planter and farmer would want to sell their crops in England for profit. But shipping involved certain risks, such as damage and loss at sea. Therefore, they eventually adapted to a system which minimized the risks, the use of the factor. The factor was an

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[6]Charles N. Glaab and A. Theodore Brown, A History of Urban America (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1967), p. 2.

[7]Lewis E. Atherton, The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), pp. 5-6.

economic agent of a company located in Europe, usually in Scotland, sent to serve an area of Tidewater Virginia. The factor would collect the crops and collectively ship them to the company. In return, he furnished the planters and farmers with "slaves, provisions, and machinery on generous credit."[8] In addition, the factor was allowed to act as a merchant to the local inhabitants of an area by selling goods for cash at a store. In most cases, "these stores were not simple affairs, but a brick residence with attached warehouses, shops, and barns."[9] Thus, the factor expanded his work as crop agent for the local planters and farmers and became a store merchant. These stores served as economic centers for the local regions, in the form of central places, and often became the nucleus of permanent settlements.[10]

The formal and functional regions described above provided the context in which the legislated towns were placed. Functional and stage analysis of these towns will show that they often took the form of central places

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[8] Ibid., p. 8.

[9] Robert William Spoede, "William Allason: Merchant in an Emerging Nation," Ph.D. dissertation, College of William and Mary, 1973, p. 16.

[10] Calvin Brewster Coulter, Jr., "The Virginia Merchant," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1944, p. 17.

within the scheme of the store system, and therefore, were part of a type of urbanization present in colonial Virginia.

Analysis of the Seventeen Successful Towns

It will be remembered that theoretically a town is a settlement unit that has diversified from farming. It has a function, determined by its geographic location and supported by its inhabitants. If this definition is applied to the towns created by the Virginia General Assembly, patterns appear that explain the factors necessary for urban development in the Tidewater area.

As has been stated, there are seven theoretical stages a town can experience.[11]

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[11]Taylor, "Urban Geography," pp. 524-525.

Stage		Description
1.	Sub-infantile	one street; no differentiation between residential and functional areas
2.	Infantile	beginnings of street grid system
3.	Juvenile	fairly clear segregation of commercial areas in center of town; residential area on outskirts
4.	Adolescent	further segregation of areas; multiple (more than two) functions
5.	Mature	distinct residential and functional areas; segregation of wealthy and poor; multiple functions
6.	Late Mature	attempts at replanning for improvement
7.	Senile	decay and abandonment

Even though this system uses relative terms, it is a useful procedure to understand the relative growth of the legislated towns. When stage analysis is applied, the towns become divided this way:[12]

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[12]The following stages are used in reference to the maximum growth of a town in the colonial period.

Stage	# of Towns	Towns
I. Sub-infantile	3	Brick House Flowerdew Hundred Varina
II. Infantile[13]	9	Delaware Grays Creek Jamestown Marlborough Nansemond Patesfield Queenstown Tindals Point Warwick
III. Juvenile	3	Bermuda Hundred Kinsale Onancock
IV. Adolescent	4	Hampton Tappahannock Urbanna Yorktown
V. Mature	1	Norfolk

In addition, seven towns, although legislated, never existed: Chickacony, New-Castle, Nomenie, Northampton, Peace Point, Queensborough, Smiths Fort.

Brick House, Flowerdew Hundred and Varina are considered "sub-infantile" for there is no evidence that they ever had a planned grid formation, or specific residential and functional areas. Those towns classified

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[13]Three of these towns, Jamestown, Nansemond and Patesfield, ceased to exist before the end of the colonial period. Hence, they are not included among the seventeen towns functionally analyzed in this section of the chapter.

as "infantile" did have grid systems. Although Nansemond, and Patesfield were surveyed in 1680, and Queenstown was surveyed in 1692, their plats have not survived. William Claiborne surveyed Jamestown in 1621 and Warwick, if it did not receive a grid in 1680, certainly had one by 1740 when Richard Randolph devised his "Philadelphia scheme." For the other towns of this classification, Marlborough, Delaware, Tindals Point and Grays Creek, the surviving plats were made in 1691, 1706, 1707 and 1772, respectively. Bermuda Hundred and Kinsale, the "juvenile towns," all had shipping areas large enough to be segregated from the residential sections of the towns. Likewise, the "adolescent" towns, Hampton, Onancock, Tappahannock, Urbanna and Yorktown, had divisions of areas, but also multiple functions. Norfolk was the only legislated town that conformed to the requirements of a "mature" rating.

Another way to determine the relative success of these towns is to study their functions. Theoretically, the more functions a town develops, the more growth that town will experience. Analysis of the functions of the seventeen surviving towns shows:[14]

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[14]The five theoretical categories of functions, agricultural, political, cultural, economic and administrative, have been subdivided to define more accurately the service offered in these towns. All towns are assumed to have had residential and, therefore, some sort of communications functions.

Town	# of Functions	Functions
Delaware	1	Commercial (trade, ferry)
Flowerdew Hundred	1	Commercial (trade, ferry)
Grays Creek	1	Commercial (trade, ferry)
Tindals Point	1	Commercial (trade, ferry)
Bermuda Hundred	2	Commercial (trade, ferry) Economic (mechanics)
Brick House	2	Commercial (trade, ferry) Political (county seat)
Kinsale	2	Commercial (trade) Economic (mills)
Marlborough	2	Economic (mill, brewery, glass factory) (Political, county seat until 1718)
Queenstown	2	Commercial (trade) Political (county seat)
Varina	2	Commercial (trade, ferry) Political (county seat)
Warwick	2	Political (county seat) Economic (auction market)
Onancock	3	Commercial (trade) Political (county seat) Religious (churches)
Tappahannock	3	Commercial (trade, ferry) Economic (mechanics, inns) Political (county seat)
Hampton	4	Commercial (trade, ferry) Economic (mechanics, inns) Cultural (schools) Political (county seat)
Norfolk	4	Commercial (trade) Economic (mechanics, inns) Cultural (theatre, schools) Political (borough govt.)
Urbanna	4	Commercial (trade, ferry) Political (county seat) Cultural (school) Religious (church)
Yorktown	4	Commercial (trade) Economic (mechanics, inns) Political (county seat) Religious (church)

Note that commercial functions are common to all these towns save Warwick. Although this function was given to the towns by legislation, that legislation was also repealed. The towns lost their special statuses and privileges of ports of entry. Yet, all but one developed commercial functions. The definition of urbanization used in this paper stresses that urbanization is basically an economic mechanism, and all but one of the successful towns fulfill this characteristic.

Functional analysis creates distinctions that differ from stage analysis. For example, Brick House, Flowerdew Hundred and Varina are listed as sub-infantile towns, for there is no evidence that they possessed a grid pattern. Yet, Brick House and Varina had two functions, not one. Hampton and Norfolk each had four functions, but Norfolk, because of its municipal government and three expansions, receives a mature rating, while Hampton is considered adolescent.

Function is determined by geography and supported by inhabitants. These two variables, natural setting and human activity, explain the discrepancies in the two systems. Brick House, Flowerdew Hundred and Varina were basically the same type of settlement, a central place for their counties. Brick House and Varina had commercial

and political functions, while Flowerdew Hundred had only a commercial function. The political function, county seat, meant that the courthouse was located at the site. The courthouse would be in use certain times of the year. It would not be a function of the type that continually brings the resources necessary to the town's continued development only every three months. While Brick House and Varina technically had two functions, they were of unequal quality. That which related to the functional region was the stronger function.

In the case of Hampton and Norfolk, the difference may be explained by the formal geographical factor. Norfolk had the best natural harbor in Virginia.[15] This allowed its commercial function to expand beyond Hampton's. Hence, its growth was greater.

Functions are not absolutely equal. Their power depends upon the interaction of other factors. It should also be noted that these towns did not begin equally. At some of the sites, English settlements (meaning more than one family) existed before legal status was conferred by the 1680, 1691 and 1705 acts. Of the seventeen surviving towns, Bermuda Hundred, Brick House, Flowerdew Hundred, Hampton, Norfolk, Onancock, Tindals Point and Varina

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[15]Wright, ed., Prose Works of William Byrd, p. 173.

existed in some form before 1680. Yet, this seems to have had little relation to their growth in the eighteenth century.

Ten Unsuccessful Towns

Twenty-seven towns were legislated. Ten did not exist at the end of the colonial period. Of these, seven were never physically created. Only three towns (Jamestown, Nansemond, Patesfield) were built that had faded by 1776. All three achieved maximum growth in the infantile stage.

The reasons for the non-existence of these ten towns cannot be documented in all cases. But apparent cause can be cited in some cases. The following reasons caused the legislated towns' failures:[16]

Town	Cause of Failure
Chickacony	not known
*Jamestown	loss of administrative function
Nansemond	eclipsed by Norfolk
New-Castle	not known
Nomenie	not known
Northampton	not known
*Patesfield	loss of commercial function
Peace Point	not known
Queensborough	eclipsed by Yorktown
Smiths Fort	not known

[16]Asterisks indicate causes that are documented.

It should also be noted that sites may never have developed as towns due to the repeal of the legislation designating them as such. As the historical sketches of Chapter III show, it appears that some trustees may have decided to halt all activity on the building of a town when its legal status was in doubt.

Of the remaining seventeen towns, only eight survived the nineteenth century: Kinsale, Onancock, Tindals Point (Juvenile); Hampton, Tappahannock, Urbanna, Yorktown (Adolescent); Norfolk (Mature). Only four of the nine towns that disappeared have documented causes:

Town	Cause of Failure
Delaware	isolation of peninsula
Marlborough	loss of Mercer's interest
Queenstown	loss of land to river
Warwick	removed from accessible highways

The factors that brought about the declines of the legislated towns, whether documented or speculative, reveal that these towns lacked one or more of the necessary components of a town (function, geographic determination, human activity).

Towns did exist in colonial Virginia because they did not need legislative approval to survive. But, as above analysis shows, several interrelated factors determined the existence of towns. Towns first needed a reason

for existence, a function. But functions were not absolute factors. Their strength was tempered by geographical and human factors. Thus, Norfolk had the largest commercial function, for it had the best natural harbor.

It would seem the choice of sites for towns by the General Assembly was arbitrary. There is no existing evidence that the sites were chosen for personal or speculative gain. They were designated on the reasons of an existing settlement or the likelihood that the area would be a good port. That the survival rate is over fifty percent seems remarkable.

Moreover, a form of urbanization existed, too, in these towns. The majority of the surviving towns played roles in the functional region by being central places, such as Brick House, or as units connecting Virginia to the rest of the world, such as Norfolk. If urbanization is a dynamic process of growth that is basically an economic mechanism that serves to unite the entire society, these towns show that some degree of urbanization took place in Virginia.

As one historian has written about this form of urbanization:

Urban settlements were an important and distinctive element in the geography of the colony. The ties between them and surrounding areas were instrumental in changing the character of these areas and in turn imparted certain distinctive qualities to each urban settlement. They played a key role in economic development and many of the changes taking place within the colony are only understandable in terms of the growth, function, and distribution of urban settlements. They were few and small, but the activities carried on by their inhabitants were of considerable significance.[17]

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[17]Harry Roy Merrens, Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964), p. 142.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

At the outset of this investigation, urbanization was defined as a dynamic process of growth beyond rural life styles not limited by time or space. It is basically an economic mechanism and involves interaction with the entire society, not simply one segment living within the physical boundary of a town or a city. It was further explained that a town unit or urbanization can be identified by functions which are determined by geographic location and supported by people.

The above criteria were applied to colonial Virginia through the study of the twenty-seven legislated towns which were used as a "control group," i.e., the sites were towns by legal definition. The historical sketches showed that seven sites that were legislated failed to materialize, and failed to develop functions. In addition, three more towns existed, for they had functions, but then faded when those functions ceased to exist. Of the remaining seventeen sites, all had functions and all but one were primarily economic

mechanisms. Therefore, by the definitions used for this project, all were towns and all but one fulfilled part of the definition of urbanization.

But urbanization also involves interaction between the unit and the entire society. In colonial Virginia, the functional geographic region of the store system provided this interaction. The sixteen towns that were economic mechanisms were part of this functional region that linked the farmlands to the non-farming areas to the other colonies to Europe. The nature of the functional region, by nature of the formal region, the presence of four major rivers accessible for long distances to most ocean vessels, was dispersed. Hence, a dispersed system, the factor and store, helped to establish a dispersed system of urbanization, of which these sixteen towns were a part.

But they were not the only components of the functional region. These sixteen were chosen as part of a control group. It should be noted that other towns and cities played major roles in this system, including Dumfries, Richmond, Falmouth, Fredericksburg, and

Alexandria.[1] This, then, is one limitation of this study.

And, these sixteen towns are exclusively within the Tidewater region. An additional study of the towns and forms of functional and formal regions within the Piedmont and mountain areas of colonial Virginia, and their relation to all the Tidewater towns, would be necessary in order to draw a complete picture of the nature of colonial Virginia urbanization.

Yet, even this study of twenty-seven towns of colonial Virginia shows that urbanization was present. This urbanization was characterized by central places and developed by a functional region that was determined by the nature of the formal region. It is indeed certain that historians should question the traditional interpretation that Virginia had no towns. And in order to effectively study the problem, historians must look beyond their own research and investigate the theories of other disciplines that may aid them. The question of Virginia urbanization demands interdisciplinary study.

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[1] See James H. Soltow, The Economic Role of Williamsburg (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, 1965), pp. 20-74, for complete discussion of the roles of these towns in the store system. And, no discussion of Virginia towns is complete without a brief note on the role of Williamsburg. It, of course, had a political function. But an economic role stemmed from the "Public Times," the Meeting of Merchants, an institution which developed to meet the needs of colonial business for some kind of central system of exchange in a decentralized economy.

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